

PREFACE

Unsatisfactory Essay-writing

WHEN a boy's essays are unsatisfactory, his teacher—or he himself, if he is his own teacher—should be able to put a finger on the chief weakness or weaknesses. If the teacher thinks that the boy is not trying, even then he must ask how far the fault lies with want of industry and of will-power, with want of desire to improve and of readiness to work hard, how far, on the other hand, the fault lies with want of interest and of method.

Speaking for myself, I know that my chief weakness was ignorance. For fifteen years I practised essay-writing *ad nauseam*, with a strong desire to improve and readiness to work hard. Not till after these years did I discover the root of the mischief.

It was that I had been doing far too many things at once.

The school and university subjects included French, mathematics, geography, history, Greek, Latin, etc. I say without hesitation that it was almost as absurd to expect me to do a satisfactory essay in only one process as to expect me to learn all the above subjects simultaneously by attempting to read the pages of Chardenal,

Todhunter, Collier, Mommsen, Thucydides, Cicero, etc., all with one comprehensive glance

At the end of the school-term it was clear that I was reasonably good at French and at mathematics, very feeble at geography and history, and so on. especially, that I was very feeble at English composition. The examiners were able to review and report on my subjects one by one, even while they wrote a general report on my whole work—"Clumsy, yet ingenious"!

But no examiner, no teacher, reviewed my English composition itself as if it contained a number of parts no less different one from another than French is from mathematics. Every one simply said "Feeble," or "Bad." No one took each part or process of my essay-writing in turn, and estimated it by itself. Still less did any one tell me how to improve each part or process by itself.

To change the comparison, I was told to build a whole house. I did my stupid best; I was told I had built a bad house. I was not told whether the fault was the absence of a staircase or a kitchen, or the presence of too many small rooms, or the wrong arrangement of rooms, or the quality of laying of the bricks, or the furnishing and papering of the rooms, or some other part of the process.

Had I been told, I could so easily, and so willingly would, have made a special study of wall-papers, for example, or whatever other branch required more knowledge and skill. As it was, I was given a general criticism—"The house is bad," and I was asked to build another and another, which were greeted with the same general condemnation.

The Value of Method

Then, as I have described elsewhere, I learnt a lesson from games, a lesson of method. And the lesson was this —

Do not go on practising and failing. If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again. But if still you don't succeed, analyse the thing, and practise each part or process of it as a more or less distinct art.

There will be plenty of time to blend the parts together into a whole when you have mastered each part by itself.

To change the comparison once again: if you were conducting a band, you would not make every member of the band practise equally, because the music did not sound quite right. You would find out which member of the band was making mistakes, and you would insist that he should practise more than the others. You would not compel the whole of your band to practise with him, any more than a stage-manager would compel the whole of his troupe to rehearse the whole of a piece because some one actor was not up to the mark.

Further, a stage-manager would not take this one actor all through his part because some of it was not up to the mark: he would train the actor particularly in the special deficiencies.

But those who have tried to learn or teach essay-writing have usually failed to apply business-methods.

In America there are business-doctors. A manager of a large and complicated business knows that somewhere there are some mistakes: he knows this because there is too little profit (just as the essay-writer at school

knows that there are some mistakes because there are too few marks—or too many blue marks) He calls in the business-doctor The business-doctor does not merely take a bird's-eye view of the business as a whole, but goes into each part and process of it, and points out the mistakes and weaknesses, and—suggests the remedies and preventives

Essay-writing needs its doctors, who shall not merely take a bird's-eye view of the essay as a whole, but shall go into each part or process of it, and point out the mistakes, and—suggest remedies and preventives

I think that such a doctor will pronounce very few essays to be “organically sound ” nor will he always find the weakness to be in the heart! In answer to the question, “Why do so many tens of thousands of boys and girls, in spite of abundant ‘practice,’ still fail to write essays even moderately well?” he will be likely to reply, “Not so much from want of industry and of will-power, as from want of interest and of method

“They usually have too little interest in the subject set, and too little practice in the art or arts of working it into an essay”

Interest and Sensible Concentration required

The boys would find, I think, that if they focussed their attention, not on essay-writing as one simple process, but on each of its various processes in turn, as a more or less separate business, the interest would be greater and the concentration easier

For essay-writing can be analysed into a number of distinct and separate (or separable) parts or processes, just as building can

And, unless a boy's essays are, naturally, quite good, his essay-writing should be so divided, instead of being "practised" again and again as if it were just one mental task, or at the most two (to make a scheme and then write the essay), instead of six or seven mental tasks combined

Most arts are complex. The art of living is complex. People declaim about the simple life, but simplicity is safe only after a number of separate arts of life have been mastered. Some people are masters of these arts—such as the art of breathing in the right way, of speaking in the right way, of sitting and moving in the right way, of eating in the right way, and eating the right things—by nature. They are the people of genius. Others have only one way of mastering these arts—that is, right practice. Wrong practice does not make perfect.

The complexity of the art of writing, whether we are writing one paragraph or a whole book, and of speaking, whether we are saying one sentence or preaching a whole sermon, has already been explained in a larger book, called "How to Prepare Books, Essays, Lectures, Articles, Speeches". The processes of essay-writing are analysed in that book, to which the reader can refer for further details.

This book is written at the request of many who have read the larger book. They wished me to work out some actual essays, part by part, process by process. It is as if, after having described the parts of a house, I had been asked to build a house, and so make my description clearer and more real.

It has been gratifying to me to know that those who had read the larger book were pleased with it, and helped by it—for instance, in preaching, in essay-writing, in

journalism, and even in conversation I have tried to make this book not only shorter, but also less philosophical and more practical, less suggestive, more dogmatic,

Processes of Essay-writing, and Advantages of Mastering them

The advantages of practising the different processes of essay-writing each as a separate and single process, are not merely improved speaking and writing, though this is in itself no small gain

It will be found that, with my way of preparing essays, first of all there is the all-round view of important questions. Instead of a one-sided or narrow opinion, there is an opinion with perspective. There is less fanaticism, which is due to some misunderstanding of the problem or the public, there is better poise.

Discrimination is exercised as to what ideas are good or bad—what ideas are to be selected or rejected—for particular purposes and particular audiences. This cannot but improve the faculty of discrimination generally.

It involves, also, sympathy with others. The question must not be simply, "What interests me?" but "What interests my audience?" Here, also, there cannot but be increased sympathy of a general kind.

Orderliness is another faculty that is developed. The practice in arrangement of ideas, as a separate process, must inevitably better our powers of arrangement generally.

Then there is alertness. The learner is encouraged to observe ordinary things in daily life with a view to using them in his essays, either as instances or as illustrations. No longer can there be the same regardlessness and forgetfulness as before.

The memory is trained, not merely the memory in its popular sense—the storing up of a number of facts or even a number of principles, but the readiness to use the stored facts and principles when they are needed. It is memory, together with the application of the things remembered.

Sensible Concentration and Method

One of the secrets of a good memory is concentration. It is one of the secrets of success in any and every branch of life. But its real meaning is usually misunderstood. Sensible concentration is best attempted, by a beginner, on a task not too hard, not too complex. That is the kind of concentration which is trained here. Instead of the reader trying fruitlessly to concentrate on essay-writing, he is made to concentrate first on the process of collecting ideas, then on that of selecting ideas, and so forth. In the end, very likely he will be able to concentrate on essay-writing as a complete process. But, just as in a stroke of billiards or lawn tennis he may be making many mistakes although he is doing his best to concentrate, and can only correct himself by mastering each part of the process, so in essay-writing.

And I think beyond doubt that my method is a training in method generally. The way of learning things not as wholes but as parts or processes, of learning part by part, and especially of having easy beginnings,

ESSAYS IN THE MAKING

is, I am sure, a sound one to apply to all new tasks. It does not matter whether it is billiards, or lawn tennis, or some more serious pursuit,—if indeed anything could ever be treated more seriously! The right method for any except the genius seems to be to analyse and find out the parts of processes that compose the whole, master these parts or processes one by one, paying special attention to those which are still weak in our own case, and eventually make these processes sub-conscious and nearly automatic.

Another merit of my way is leisureliness. An essential part of the advice offered here is to be active without hurry, and especially not to hurry through one process to another before the first process has been mastered—not thoroughly mastered, perhaps, but partially mastered. This is not a plea for the slowness of the snail. It is rather akin to a plea for the time to digest, and even to enjoy, what one eats.

Not long ago I had a new system of exercise described to me. I had already studied many systems, and had found that each advocate of his own or her own system was quite convinced (or at least tried to convince me) that his or her system was the only one for everybody. The latest inventor made no such claim. It was refreshing to find an enthusiast who began by saying that her system was not suited for healthy children or for active and normal people. She thought it would not hurt them appreciably, but it would not benefit them appreciably either. I hope my admission (that my system is not suited to every one) will be equally refreshing to the reader.

Main Types of Essays

In the first place, it has been impossible to cover every type of essays. I have only been able to take the main types. For example, I have not covered the type of essay such as, "What are the main principles of Evolution?" (the survival of the fittest, variation influenced by environment, disappearance of function without disappearance of form, acquirement of function, and so forth), nor, again, an essay like "Sanitation," or "Art." I have not told people what were the different departments of sanitation, what were the different divisions of art. I have told them how to estimate the effects of sanitation and of art, but there must always be a large number of special topics to be left to the common sense, and observation, and research of the reader.

Once more, this book is not for the genius, unless he wishes to teach others. Indeed, I will go so far as to say that it might even spoil the writing of the genius to study this book closely. I have known cricketers who batted well till some one tried to teach them how to bat, mathematicians who calculated well till some one tried to teach them how to add, subtract, and multiply, mechanics and musicians whose performances were excellent until they were forced to study method and technique.

And even those who may be called duffers, I do not wish to tie down to hard and fast and stereotyped lines. I rather wish to elicit ideas, not to say "Learn this," but rather to ask "What is your idea about this?" Hence throughout the book will be found the stars of the following kind —

* * * * *

These denote that the reader is asked to think for himself, and to jot down his own notions before he reads further.

My Objects in View

My object is not to make every one rush into print or speech, but rather to elicit as much as I can, and, as it were, to help every one to claim his natural inheritance, and fulfil his responsibility of writing and speaking fairly well, to give every one who writes unsuccessfully a better chance. I know there must be thousands who feel within them a power to write or speak, and whose mental discomfort and dissatisfaction is due to the fact that ideas are struggling for expression or perhaps struggling for arrangement. I believe my book will help these. Sometimes the belief in one's own power to write or speak is a delusion, but I fail to see how any one can find out whether such a belief is a delusion or not till he has tried himself fairly and given himself every chance. Not till then will a person be thoroughly satisfied that he is not a Shakespeare or a Demosthenes.

Nor do I guarantee immediate success for any one, however faithfully he works at the exercises. A hurried greatness of hothouse growth is of little value. It may take a year for the processes to be engrained in the mind. Brain-cells have to be stimulated. Connections between brain-cells have to be formed, and developed, and made easy and natural. Possibly the fruitage of the work will not appear for a year or more.

The Training should serve as a General Mental Training as well

But what I do claim is that, for most people, some such method as mine will be of very great value, incidentally, to help them in an integral part of their

daily life and work (namely, writing and speaking), but finally and chiefly to develop good qualities—a poised opinion, discrimination, sympathy, orderliness, alertness, memory, sensible concentration, general method, and leisureliness with activity

My Desire is not to Cram, but to Elicit Thought—

My object is not to cram any one with information, but rather to make readers think before they absorb, and to use when they have absorbed, to help readers to correct themselves, especially in their weak points, and therefore to find their weak points, or parts, or processes, to make people eventually more self-active, less dependent on any outside teaching, including the teaching offered in such a book as this

and to Elicit Criticism

A great compliment to me would be a thorough criticism of this book, together with suggestions as to how it might be improved. If some one wrote to me and said that he had found the book so useful that he was now able to dispense with it altogether, that would be the highest praise of all

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PART I COLLECT IDEAS

Important Note—The modern tendency of readers is to hurry through page after page. Half the usefulness of this book will be missed unless the reader reads leisurely, and conscientiously works out for himself his own answers before he looks to see what I suggest. The stars (***) mark the places where he should pause and think for himself.

I shall be very glad to receive any such suggestions—namely, those which a reader works out for himself and then fails to find in this book. As an example of such a suggestion, here is a hint as to the collection of ideas, not on sheets of paper or slips or cards, as I suggest, but in a foolscap-sized note-book, in which quotations and extracts can be put. It was kindly sent me by one of those who had taken my “Writer’s Course” (by correspondence).

“I have generally collected ideas in a commonplace book, with numbered pages, and a lettered index of subjects at the beginning. In this index I refer to the pages of the book. Thus I have the words—

“Music, pp 6, 24, 38

“Poetry, pp 5, 19, 51, see 24”

When people have good plans already, I do not mean to force my plans on them. And, in any case, I want to know what the other plans are, and how my plans can be improved. The reader who takes my ideas for granted, and follows them slavishly, will not do himself justice.

SUPPOSE you were asked to write a testimonial for some one, what should you say about him or her? It would be very hard to think at once of all that you ought to mention. A mistress, when asked to give a servant's "character," often omits some quite important matters. She finds it exceedingly difficult to collect her ideas.

If, however, there were definite questions to be answered—Is the girl truthful? Is she strong? Is she punctual? Is she clean? Is she respectful?—the task would be easy, even if the answers were libellous.

Again, when you are packing before you go on a journey, you are apt to leave out something that you will want, unless you can recall all the things that you may possibly want. For your journey to-day, perhaps you want only enough for a game of lawn-tennis and a dinner-party afterwards, and then a night and early morning in the country-house, but even here there is room for omissions. Clearly, it would help you to have a full list of things that you might want. Try to make this full list for a week's holiday on the Continent. Do not be afraid of putting down too many possible things. Do not bother about the order. Simply collect ideas.

* * * * *

Then it will be easy for you to select what you want for any given purpose, and reject the rest, then to arrange what you have selected.

Exactly the same principle can be applied in the collection of ideas for an Essay. A good subject would

be this whole subject itself—the art of Essay-writing, but we can leave this subject till the end of the book, when you will be asked to summarise the contents of the book. It will be easier to begin with an interesting subject, “What’s in a game?”

This obviously is an Essay chiefly on results. It involves, however, definition and exclusion. You have to say what a game is and what it is not.

Now, collect ideas on this subject, without troubling in the least about their arrangement or expression. Simply collect ideas as ideas, as many as you can. “What’s in a Game?” Jot down any and all ideas briefly and quickly.

* * * * *

Later on you can try the collection of ideas on the other subjects worked out in the following pages, and, later on still, of ideas on the subjects suggested as exercises. It is of no use to try any such Essay-subjects yet, it is of no use to read further, till you have made a really fair experiment. One of the great mistakes of teaching is to tell people the answers before they have realised the questions or done their best to solve them. So write down, anyhow, all the ideas you can, and, later on, add any new ideas that occur to you, including those which may be suggested by what I say.

What is your main difficulty, do you think, in the collection of ideas? Probably you are asking yourself, “What results? Where are we to look for results?” We know that games, played sensibly, make the body healthier: here is a result which can be called physical. But what other results are there? In what other spheres of life? Try to collect a list of the spheres of life.

* * * * *

You want a complete list, like the one of clothes, etc., for the journey

Before I give a list, make another short collection, collect ideas as to the value of complete lists. Of what use are complete lists?

By the way, do not put two or three collections on one sheet of paper. Keep the ideas—at any rate on each of the three subjects—on a separate page. We shall see directly that separate cards—one card for each idea—will be a still better plan. Now try to collect, on a fresh piece of paper, ideas as to why complete lists are valuable, at least for most people. After you have made the list, add fresh ideas as they occur to you.

* * * * *

Before I come to the list of the spheres of life—the physical, intellectual, etc.—I will begin with a few of the ideas which I have collected on this last subject—the value of complete lists. You will find it best, I think, always to take an instance rather than to begin with general and abstract answers. As an instance, take the complete list of things for a journey. Of what use is it to you as the packer of these things, and as the traveller and visitor afterwards?

The complete list does not tie you down as to choice or order. The complete list may mention lawn-tennis shoes and dress boots or shoes, that does not compel you to take lawn-tennis shoes or dress-boots if you are going for an ordinary day-trip in the winter, and are not going to play lawn-tennis, but will be returning the same evening about tea-time.

Nor does it tie you down as to arrangement. You are not bound to put your waistcoat below your dress-shirt because, in the list, it is mentioned before the

dress-shirt The arrangement and order you can decide easily afterwards

What the complete list is for, is not to tie you down, but to ask questions Do you need this, that, or the other thing? It prevents serious omissions, while it gives you freedom in selection It relieves the mind of the traveller and visitor, and makes him more comfortable He knows he cannot have omitted anything of importance

So a complete list prevents serious omissions of facts in an Essay, and also of principles or points of view You will find that nearly all fallacies are due to this that people are omitting some facts or some principle or point of view There is the fallacy that the Greeks were very highly civilised The fact of slavery, and the fact that the Greeks in general, and the Athenians in their prime, were not at all the same, have been omitted A principle or point of view has been omitted, namely, that Greece must be considered as a collection of groups of individuals All groups (including slaves and women) must be taken into account in the estimate of Greece The degraded position of women as household drudges in many Greek States, and the degraded position of slaves as mere mechanical contrivances for work, tend to put Greece, as a whole, on a very low level of civilisation

You will realise some of the values of complete lists (I have only mentioned two or three values here) if you take a list of the different parts of a house which you intend to build Imagine yourself an architect experimenting for the first time If you had before you a complete list of parts, you would be unlikely to omit, for example, the staircase or the bathroom

Again, when you are looking out for likely people to make up a party or a tea, it helps you to have a complete list. You are not bound to ask every one, but the full set of names prevents you from omitting any desirable people. So, if you wish to make some purchases—say, in the furnishing of your house—catalogues of shop-goods will be helpful. A catalogue of the Stores will tell you practically everything which you may need, while it does not compel you to buy one of each kind of thing!

If you think of any other values of complete lists, make notes of them. I shall be glad to receive any communications, which are sure to be useful in case my book reaches a second edition. This applies to whatever is said throughout the book. Nothing pleases me as an author more than the proof that people have read the book and thought it good enough for criticisms and new suggestions.

Now for the spheres of life. Take first the individual's life. Once more, start with an example—your own life. When you play a game, what spheres in your life does it affect? At once you think of the exercise of the muscles and the enjoyment. Very well, then you have two ideas collected. The muscles can come under the general Heading of Physical and Hygienic Effects. Enjoyment can be called enjoyment, or can come under one of the meanings of the word "Æsthetic"

* * * * *

The following list is not offered as at all a perfect one. Perhaps it is not complete. But I think it will be good as a makeshift list. It is not intended to breed morbid self-consciousness and self-introspectiveness, but it is well that, according to the old saying, a man should

know himself not merely what he looks like, whether he is too fat or too thin, how clever or stupid he is, but other matters as well. You may find it easier to think of some one else rather than yourself. It is not easy, perhaps, to see yourself from the outside.

Physical (=connected with the body) This may include—

Hygienic (=connected with health), and also perhaps—

Æsthetic The word has three meanings —

(a) Appearance

(b) Enjoyment

(c) Sense-development (sight and observation, etc.)

Spiritual and Moral (=connected with virtue, etc.)

Intellectual (cleverness, etc.) This may include—

Economical, which in its turn is closely connected with—

Social—the relation to all groups, from the animal to mankind, and to the whole of animate life, if not to the whole universe. There are some who feel social connection with the whole universe. In fact, it is a test of the civilisation of a State, with how large a number of persons and things the average person in that State finds himself in friendly connection.

Surroundings, which have so important an influence on life. Technically, they are known as environment. In considering and estimating a person's character, it is vital to consider him not as an abstract person, but as a person related to a certain environment—acting on it, and acted on by it.

Prospective—You must consider him also in view of the future—what he is becoming, what he is helping people to become, and what he is producing or going

to produce, his descendants must be included in your estimate of him

Do not bother to "learn" this list yet. It will be better, perhaps, not to learn it first, but, as I shall suggest directly, to realise it, and use it, and *let it learn itself*

But suppose you wanted to remember it, how would you do so? Collect hints, as if some one had asked you to help him to remember it, and you were trying to help him

* * * * *

This is what I should suggest. Add your own ideas to mine, or mine to yours

First, it is possible to learn in the ordinary way, as I used to learn lists of kings and battles at school. But that is a very hard way. The great conjuror Houdin practised observing the different articles in a shop, and then recalling as many as he could, and by degrees he was able at a glance to realise or photograph in his mind, and afterwards to recall, the contents of an ordinary shop-window; so that sheer learning may become easier with practice. And for certain purposes it is a really useful art.

But an easier and, I think, a more satisfactory way is to realise what these spheres mean, by actual instances, to imagine yourself, for example, playing a game. Think how it will affect your body, health, appearance, enjoyment, sense-development, character, and so forth, or how it might do so. Picture and "sense" the whole thing.

Then use my list, applying it again and again to all sorts of subjects. You will find plenty of exercises later on. But suppose you begin with some definite person whom you know well personally, or by name and fame; say, some friend of yours, or President Roosevelt, or Mr Arthur Balfour. Consider the person in the light

of these Headings Estimate the person in respect of each sphere of life

To show you the value of this way of learning things—namely, of learning them by applying and using them—I give you a very clear example from my own experience When I am preparing Health Courses for different individuals of both sexes and all ages and occupations, there are certain instructions which I like to give to almost every one They are not the same instructions, but the topic is the same I never wish to leave out advice about full breathing, leisurely eating, muscular relaxing, the mental attitude, and so forth I have a complete list of all the subjects which I wish to deal with In a few cases, as with tiny children, I leave out some subjects, or, rather, I ask the father or mother to teach the children these subjects As a rule, however, I deal with all the subjects At first I had a list which I thought complete Afterwards I found it was incomplete, and I added to it Then I used it hundreds of times, and, though the instructions differed again and again, according to the individual and his or her conditions, I found that soon I had no need to look at my complete list (or, rather, my not very incomplete list!) I had learnt it without learning it I had learnt it by using it and applying it hundreds of times

This is a lengthy process, sure but slow Until you have used the lists numbers of times, you have no guarantee that all in a moment you will be able to recall all the Headings You may have used that list above, you may understand quite well what each Heading means (that is to say, you may know each Heading, and remember it in the sense of recognising it as an old friend when you meet it), but it does not in the least follow

that on the spur of the moment, when you are called upon to deal with a subject—say, in an examination—you will recall every point of view, such as, for instance, the prospective. You will be considering a person as he is, rather than as he is tending to become. You will call him healthy when he has unhealthy children, and still unhealthy grandchildren. You will call him successful because he is rich or economically successful, when morally, and perhaps physically, he is utterly unsuccessful.

So I suggest a way in which you can memorise all the above Headings. Please do not apply this way if you can remember the Headings without it. Do not apply it till you have realised what the Headings mean, and have used them, at any rate, once or twice. Do not apply it if it does not help you. There are some whom it will not help in the very least.

I have called the way *initialising*, and have described it in "How to Remember." When you see the letters *HRH* in print, you know that it means His Royal Highness, *G.N.R.* means the Great Northern Railway. We are constantly using abbreviations, parts to represent wholes, and the sole objection to the use of any part as representing a whole will be that it is not clear. Now this same principle we can apply for the purpose of remembering lists. Take the word *Cabal*. Probably you know that the origin of it was a list of ministers. "Cabal" gives their initials—Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, etc. You will find many instances in advertisements—the *Ortoco* cigarettes (*Oriental Tobacco Company*), the *Yamitas* cure for sea-sickness, the *Lemco* Beef Extract. Now, never mind if any one says it is a childish way to use a similar plan. If the plan helps you, use it. If the plan does not help you, do not use it.

Here are the initials as they come, and you will find a nonsense word—PHASIESSP Personally, I find this word a help Each initial recalls a word and an idea, as truly as W E G recalls to me William Ewart Gladstone But perhaps this may not be your best way

Another way would be a rhyme including the above words Make your own rhyme I suggest below a rhyme for another list. If you remember the number of days in each month, as nearly every one does, by the rhyme—

“Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November,”

if you find that rhyme useful, or any other rhyme, then why not extend the principle? The test of a thing is not its absurdity (which is rather an advantage in these serious days), but its usefulness or uselessness

Yet another plan, also described in “How to Remember,” I have called the Linking system When you take the word “seven,” what other words does it suggest? Perhaps it suggests “six” and “eight,” which come on the two sides of seven, or “four” and “three,” which make seven; or “seven days”, or “heaven,” which rhymes with seven, or “Severn,” which sounds like seven, or “several,” which has the same beginning The Pelman System uses this natural and inevitable habit of associating words in groups, and turns it into a Memory System It uses other ways as well, but this is one of its most valuable features The Pelman System will take the above list, and show you how to link together Physical, Hygienic, Æsthetic, etc., in a chain of nine or eleven ideas, so that to remember any one will enable you to catch hold of the whole chain

From the one link you can work out all the rest,

by going backwards or forwards from it. The System needs practice, but in case people have difficulty in remembering without systems, in case they are not memory-geniuses, then such a system as the Pelman will be extremely useful.

Other ways also are described in "How to Remember". Once more, the test of them is their usefulness or the reverse.

But do not apply any system till you have realised the ideas, and have used and applied the ideas themselves. Do not apply any system if you can do without it. Do not apply any system if it does not suit you as an individual.

With the above list in front of you to start with, and in your memory and imagination after practice, it is easy for you to see some effects of games on individuals, on yourself and others, and on groups of individuals as individuals. Take the list, and work out a few of the effects of games—Physical, Hygienic, Æsthetic, Spiritual, Intellectual, Economical, etc.

* * * *

But in life you have to consider groups as groups. For example, at Marlborough, where I was at school, there were nearly six hundred individual boys, but they were grouped in classes, in houses, and as a whole school, and games affected the different groups as well as the different individuals. A group is a sort of a person with a character of its own.*

Perhaps no better instance exists than the Japanese. Each member of the nation is an individual, each member of the nation is also merely part of a large group. That group we can consider as a sort of in-

* Gustave le Bon's "Mind of the Crowd" is a book well worth reading.

dividual, just as we can talk of Japan fighting Russia, as if Japan, a many-million-bodied giant, were a single giant rather than many million bodies. Among the groups will be families, schools, armies, navies, the nation, nations, all mankind.

Here, clearly, you need a further list—a list of these groups, and also a list of the different activities of group-life. Social life is hardly a good word for it, group-life is better. This list you cannot separate entirely from the individual list above. But try to work out what are the departments of group-life. For details I must refer to the larger work, “How to prepare Essays”.

As an example, to give you a start, take *war*. That suggests a group of people (soldiers, etc), and it also suggests a sphere of group-life. *Law* is another example. It suggests a group of lawyers and a sphere of group-life, including the work of solicitors, barristers, and so forth. In your own life you will think of many departments—your education, your physical education and health, your amusements. These you may regard as, to some extent, group-ideas.

* * * * *

I think it will be easier to get a good list of Headings for this purpose, if you turn away from the subject of Games, and consider such a subject as “England in the Sixteenth Century”.

You could, of course, use the above list. You could consider the English people physically, hygienically, æsthetically, spiritually, intellectually, etc. Were they, on the average, taller, healthier, etc, than people are to-day?

But here are some Headings which, I believe, would help to elicit many more ideas.

1 England before the Sixteenth Century this will give you a better insight into the Sixteenth Century It will suggest causes

2 England after the Sixteenth Century this will suggest results It will show you the fruits of seeds sown in the Sixteenth Century

3 The various classes or divisions of peoples *e.g.* nobles, rich, poor, women, servants, children

4 Geography and its effects Under Geography you can mention also —

The Buildings, which are now as much a part of English "Geography" as are her rivers, trees, hills, and lakes

The neighbouring peoples

5 Industries. *e.g.* commerce What proportions of the people were engaged in this or that industry? What proportion was idle? Cp 3

6 Wealth or Poverty of England as a whole, and of various groups

7 The Government, or, rather, the different kinds of Governments—central, local, social, domestic, etc

8. The Law and Justice (or injustice)

9 The Education of various groups

10 Arts and Sciences

11 Religion or Religions

12 Peace or War

13 Daily Occupations and Customs these may include—

14 Recreations

15 Food and Drink

16 Exercise

17 Dress

18 Social life

This is very far from a complete list, but, used together with the above list, it will help to bring out most of the ideas which you know

I have put it into a rhyme for the benefit of those who are helped by rhymes—not for others. Once again, realise and master the ideas before you learn the rhyme, if indeed you learn it at all. Personally I find it useful

View times before and after, every group and every class,
Geography and buildings, and the neighbouring people, pass
To industries and commerce, wealth, the Governments, and Law,
Education, arts and sciences, religion, peace or war,
Occupations, recreations, food, drink, exercise and dress,
The social life, then view the other two lists, more or less

We shall be ready directly to come back to the Essay-subject with which we started, and collect our ideas afresh. But before doing that, realise clearly that you are not bound down to use any of these Headings which you have before you. You are not bound to consider the economical effects of games, if you do not think them worth considering, or if you do not know what the economical effects are. You are certainly not bound to treat the Headings in the above order when you come to arrange your Essay. In fact, probably the above order would be quite bad for your particular purpose. It might be best of all, perhaps, to begin with the last heading—Prospective, to show the value of a game in view of after-life itself, especially city-life, to show that the results of games may be more valuable in the future even than they are in the present—that “natural” exercise, for instance, which people cannot get in the rapidly decreasing country life, they can get in games within or near cities

Do not bother about the selection of ideas yet. Do

not bother about the order or the expression of anything else. Simply concentrate on the collection of ideas.

You will think that I am keeping you a long time from the subject which we ought to have worked out first. But, when you come to it, you will change your mind, you will see that the subject is a very difficult one, and that you must have a little practice in collecting ideas before you tackle it. It is one of the most complicated subjects which you can imagine, though perhaps the ideas which you collected at the start may seem very uncomplicated, very simple, very few. Already I expect you have realised that there is a great deal more to be said about the effects of games than occurred to you at first. Have patience, then, while you practise a little more.

Write down a collection of ideas on the following topic: *Why is it important to concentrate your attention on the collection of ideas, and not yet to try Essay-writing as a single process?*

* * * *

Obviously, concentration is a good habit generally. It is good for the character, it is good for the intellect, it makes work easier and more successful. If you concentrate on the collection of ideas, not only will you be likely to collect ideas more easily and more successfully, and to improve your own will-power and control, you will also do the later processes—the arrangement, expression, etc.—more easily and more successfully, you will arrange and then express ideas more easily and more successfully, because you will have no worry as to the collection of ideas that is all over. By the time you come to arrange ideas, you will have finished the collection of ideas, or, at least, will practically have finished

it Having begun to get the habit of concentration, you will not be so likely to worry about the processes which follow—the expression of ideas in particular When you are arranging ideas, you will be arranging ideas, and will not be letting your thoughts fly away hither and thither to other matters

Add to these Headings (namely, the good effects on character and on the work itself) any other Headings that occur to you

In order to make the value of concentration clear, and perhaps in order to throw new light upon it, collect comparisons and contrasts that will illustrate and emphasise the value I will give you one to start with You see a lake spread out over a wide ground That lake has little power But imagine that lake concentrated into one spout of water, imagine it being let loose, through only one narrow pipe, upon a place below it Think of the vast power which it would get, a power to throw away a great rock as if that rock had been a piece of cork This gives you some idea of the force which you get by concentrating In the same way you might imagine a broad river, and contrast it with the same volume of water in a narrow channel Think of other comparisons and contrasts

* * * * *

A comparison of the sun's rays focussed on a single point may occur to you Other comparisons may be —

An army massed against a single point in the enemy's lines

A number of search-lights turned upon a single spot

One side in a tug-of-war against another side The first side uses its force along the same line and at the

same moment. The members of the other side pull partly one against another.

Perhaps the following illustration has not occurred to you. Mr. C. B. Fry and Mr. G. W. Beldam have just written a book on cricket. They show all sorts of strokes in action, and all important parts of strokes. Now, concentration upon cricket as a complete game would be extremely difficult. Concentration on batting alone would be easier. Concentration on one stroke in batting—let us say the off-drive—would be easier still. Still easier would be concentration on the position and (if necessary) the movements of the feet during the off-drive, then on the movements of the trunk and arms, and so forth. Similarly, in Essay-writing, concentration must be more effective, as a rule, when it is turned upon each process in order.

Now work out contrasts to the above comparisons

* * * * *

At last we come, better prepared, to the question, "What's in a game?"

Here is a collection of a few ideas. It would be easy to double or treble the number, but these will be sufficient as an illustration.

By the way, if you feel in the mood for collecting ideas, it may perhaps be better at first to let your thoughts run free without the use of any complete list. Some excellent ideas may suggest themselves then, ideas which perhaps the use of the complete list at the start might cramp. Afterwards, however, the use of the complete list is likely to add some new ideas to the ideas already collected.

Anyhow, bear in mind that this list is suggestive. It is not to tie you down. It is not put forward as better than your list. Your list may be better than it.

A FEW IDEAS ON "WHAT'S IN A GAME?"

Physical and Hygienic effects —

- Muscles developed, or over-developed
- Sane outlet for physical energy, on the reverse,
if play is excessive
- Organs strengthened, or (especially the heart
and lungs) strained
- More oxygen inhaled, hence improved health, if
air is fresh
- Appearance improved, except in cases of over-
training, etc
- Enjoyment increases health, serving as a tonic,
but games are not enjoyed by all
- These two last ideas could also come under

Æsthetic effects —

- The senses exercised, especially the sight, hear-
ing, etc
- Both character and intellect are based largely on
early sense-impressions

Spiritual and Moral effects —

- Sane outlet for competitive spirit
- Pluck and courage
- Obedience to law
- Honour and courtesy
- Sense of membership with others
- Power to bear and make use of defeat and
success
- Self-control
- Self-expression.
- But sometimes these lessons are not carried into
daily life they are confined to games.

Intellectual effects —

- May teach method, especially co-operation
- Emphasises value of right practice
- Prompt adaptation to new conditions
- Originality
- But sometimes devotion to games hinders intellectual work

Economical effects —

- Sensible recreation worth while, in view of quicker and better work, owing to better health
- Character proved at games may secure a good position in an office
- But play sometimes leads to waste of money, time, and energy

Social effects —

- Obvious sympathy between individuals and classes, *e.g.* at a country-house or village cricket match
- Shows right view of a person towards his opponents, as hinging out his own weaknesses
- Fair play and free self-activity in relation to others

Surroundings —

- Often put to best use in play, *e.g.* use of open spaces (playgrounds, etc.)
- Games enable one to be healthy in otherwise unhealthy surroundings

Prospective —

- Store the mind with healthy and honourable memories to help the future character
- The health of one generation most important for the health of the next

Especially games for children, as training—cp
the play of animals—for whole of after-life

Now, suppose that the Essay is on "Games," not merely on, "What's in a Game?" Needless to say, this Essay will include the results of games—it will include the Essay on which you have collected ideas, but it will include a good many other matters beyond. You will think of some of these at once. For instance, almost certainly you will think of such a Heading as "The History of Games," if the article is a general one on games.

There is always a great difficulty about an Essay with a general title like "Games." You say to yourself, in an examination, for example, "What am I meant to do? Am I meant merely to give the results of games, or am I meant to touch on these and also on the history of games, the reason why people play them, the mistakes they make, and so forth?" As a general rule, for purposes of practice, it may be well to treat each subject first in one way, then in the other, first, that is to say, to collect ideas on one aspect, then on all aspects. What Headings would you suggest besides "History" and "Changes in the history (or evolution) of Games"?

* * * * *

I think you will find that the list (nearly a complete list) which I shall put before you is an exceedingly useful one. Together with the former list (Physical, Hygienic, Æsthetic, etc), this will carry you a long way through the art of collecting ideas. Your Essay-subject may be Poverty, Colonisation, Imperialism, the Fiscal Problem, in fact, without any difficulty, I could write down a hundred such subjects. In all these the following list will help you to answer the question, "What am I to say on this subject?" You are not in any way bound

to use all the Headings. Perhaps you would like to leave out the history? Very well. But at least it will do you no harm to have the complete list in front of you, so that you may not miss out anything of importance—so that, indeed, whatever you do miss out you miss out purposely, not by accident.

Study this list closely, because I shall show directly that the same list, with slight alterations, will apply to an essay on a person, no matter whether he be Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, or W. G. Grace! You have to consider not only the man all-round (here the Physical, Hygienic, Æsthetic, etc., Headings will be useful), but also the “Results” or influence of the man, and the “Causes” (heredity, etc.) of the man.

1. Evidences and proofs. a very important Heading in dealing with most subjects.

2. Examples, from which the conclusions are drawn.

3. Describe the divisions or parts which make up the whole. thus, “Games” include many different games—Bridge as well as Cricket and Football.

4. Changes. *eg* Football is not what it was—there is more co-operation now.

5. Causes and reasons why games are what they are, also influences which encourage games.

6. Hindrances and obstacles.

7. Effects. all-round effects, both good and bad and doubtful. Contrast these with the professed objects and aims.

8. Comparisons, *eg* between games of different nations, classes, etc., between games and war, games and religion, etc.

9. Contrasts, similarly.

10 Fallacies should be exposed as, that "we all play too much," that "games are frivolous," etc

Here, once more, I offer a rhyme, not for all, but for those who, having realised and mastered these Headings, may find a rhyme useful in order to gather them together in a safe bundle, as it were —

Collect proofs and examples, thence describe the parts and whole,
The changes, then the causes, helps, and hindrances, extol
The good effects and blame the bad weigh both effects and aims,
Compare, contrast, show fallacies (like fallacies of names)

The above list is easily adapted for another purpose. Suppose your subject is no longer "Games," but a person—say, Napoleon. Go through these Headings, and see how they will suggest ideas about Napoleon

* * * * *

1 Evidences and proofs conflicting

2 Examples These will be episodes in the life of Napoleon—*anecdotes*, etc, as well as battles

3 Divisions or parts These will be Physical and Hygienic, *Æsthetic*, etc, so far as concerns the more personal Napoleon

The more public Napoleon will be considered under such Headings as appear in list to be given below, *eg* Government, War, Finance, Education, etc, and his work in these spheres

4 Changes very marked near the end of his career

5 Causes and reasons why he was what he was
Besides the individuality (see 3), we have Heredity, going back beyond the father and mother, and Environment

6. Hindrances and obstacles similarly

7 Effects and influence here also (cp 3) we must view the effects on Geography, Government, etc

- 8 Comparisons, *e.g.* with Julius Cæsar
- 9 Contrasts
- 10 Fallacies as, that he was altogether great

At the risk of excessive repetition, I must emphasise that such lists are intended to bring out and elicit your ideas not to tell you what to say, but to ask you whether you would like to say anything about so-and-so. I mean them, too, rather in the nature of an examination paper, asking questions instead of giving answers. Read once again through the ideas which you and I have collected on the subject of the value of complete lists, and then use and master these lists.

Now for the mechanism of collection. How are you to collect ideas? Of course you will concentrate your attention on collecting them, and you may use complete lists, but how would you write down the ideas? Picture yourself as collecting ideas, or once again actually collect them. That will be the best way. Collect your own ideas as to the mechanism of collection. Imagine yourself teaching some one how to collect ideas, or perhaps how to jot down ideas which he has collected.

* * * * *

Write down your hints briefly. That is a very obvious rule. You are writing them down for yourself, not for any one else. No matter whether you are writing them on a sheet of paper or a number of slips of paper or on a number of cards, be as brief as possible, without sacrificing clearness—clearness for yourself. For at present you are your only reader.

I am leaving out of the question altogether the few people who can remember ideas which they have collected without writing them down—the few genius-rememberers

and the few genius Essay-writers I am not writing for them at all. In fact, very likely, if I tried to teach a genius Essay-writer how to prepare an Essay, he would lose his natural art. Too often have musicians been ruined by being taught a technique which they already knew instinctively. The same applies to painters, inventors, and so on.

Buy cards—I mean small cards. My own are two inches by three for the collection of ideas under a Heading, two inches by four for Headings themselves. To anticipate what I shall describe very soon, I may say that I use these cards for the collection of ideas, thus. I write down briefly each fresh idea on a fresh card, and put each used card in turn at the bottom of the pack, without any regard for order or expression. As an exercise in collecting ideas, work out what would be the advantages of this card-system.

* * * * *

Among these advantages I think you are sure to have mentioned this—that when you use these cards you do not have to bother about order, because it is so easy afterwards to arrange and re-arrange the cards in any order, just as it is easy to arrange a hand at cards after it has been dealt.

Another advantage you have mentioned is that, thanks to these cards on which you write down ideas very briefly, you can keep pace with your thoughts. Many people, when a subject is suggested to them, find a flood of ideas rush to the surface of their mind. They try to give expression to all these ideas, and succeed in giving expression to one or two only, out of some ten or more. With the card-system I have never found my thoughts outrun my pen, or rather my pencil.

Now pretend to give some one, whom you want to help, some hints on collecting ideas, so that he may make a successful collection. You have already considered the technique, the way to write ideas down—namely, briefly, and perhaps on cards or slips of paper, one card or slip for each idea, now give advice as to how to get the ideas themselves—how to collect many more ideas than will be wanted in the Essay

* * *

First think out the ideas for yourself. As I said before, it might be better not to begin with the complete lists, but to let your mind run freely

Use common sense and observation. Here are two examples

A friend of mine was reading for an examination with two other men. They all mastered the text-book, and were ready to answer any question out of it. In the examination they all got full marks for all questions that were dealt with in the text-book, but there was one question which was not answered in the text-book. The two others did not try to answer it. My friend had read nothing on the subject before, but he used his common sense. The question was, "What conditions are necessary for the right fusion of metals?" What conditions are necessary?

* * *

This was my friend's answer, and, when once you are told, you see how obvious it is, you wonder that you did not think of it directly. You will find that many questions have a very commonplace answer, if only you give yourself time to think, and have a little more confidence in your own power to use your own native common sense

1 The metals must be pure and free from alloy
 2 The metals must be mixed in the requisite proportions

3 The metals must be heated to the requisite degree

Now, as an exercise in the use of common sense, try to answer a similar question on the principles of cookery. Perhaps you are unfortunate enough never to have learnt cookery. You think you do not know what the principles are. See if you can work out a few by common sense

* * * * *

I am quite sure that my friend's answers have suggested to you that the materials, as well as the utensils, must be pure. There must be no impure elements in the foods, or there must be as few as possible, and there must be no dirt.

And my friend's second and third answers will help. The materials must be mixed in the right proportions. They must also be chosen in the right way. A cook must not serve up a meal simply of fattening and heating elements. There must be balance, not simply bulk.

Then the materials must be heated to the requisite degree, and kept heated for the requisite time, if any heating is required. Salads, of course, do not require heating.

Have you thought of any other principles? Here are a few in case you have not.

The materials must be as fresh as possible.

They must be suited to the individual taste (the materials themselves, and the preparation of them as well). A person who cannot digest lentils must not be given lentils. I will go a step further: a person who eats too much pudding should not be offered too much pudding!

There must be as little waste as possible. Odds and ends must be used scientifically. For instance, I suppose that three-quarters of what is now thrown away could be used for vegetable soups if the kitchen contained a large stock-pot.

The best (which are not always the most expensive) utensils must be chosen.

I have here illustrated common sense and a number of ideas which it may suggest. Now I will try to illustrate observation. You have an Essay on Sanitation. The subject frightens you. You think at once that it is altogether beyond you—a subject for sanitary inspectors, whoever they may be, perhaps a subject for doctors and hospital-managers, perhaps even a subject for other people in authority, but not for you, you know nothing about it. But imagine yourself in your own home. Think of what is done or is not done there with a view to healthy conditions.

* * * * *

Probably among the ideas which you have collected are—good water, good air and ventilation, cleanliness, disinfection, and so forth.

Give yourself plenty of time. Again and again I have, as it were, told myself to collect ideas on a certain subject. Just at first I found few ideas, then, day after day, perhaps hour after hour, they seemed to come in of their own accord.

Sometimes my collection is scarcely begun, so far as I am aware, till after a week, then all of a sudden it seems to appear ready-made. This has frequently been the case with *Daily Mail* articles. I have been asked to write, or have undertaken to write, on a certain topic. I have told myself to collect ideas on that topic. I find

that the best time, the most effective time, for this order (the principle is known as "Self-suggestion") is just before sleep at night. I do not try to collect the ideas then, I just give the order. Then I know that, during the next few days, I shall be collecting ideas unconsciously (or sub-consciously). Without any effort, or without any conscious effort, I soon find that I have collected the ideas, merely by giving the order first and then allowing myself time. If I had written the article all at once, the ideas would have been fewer, less appropriate, and scarcely digested.

The best time for the conscious collection of ideas, however (and time is a very important matter), may be the early morning. Here is an interesting experience. When I was at Cambridge I found that the best time for work—and especially for original work—was the late night. Then I changed my diet, and improved my health generally, and by degrees I found that the best time was no longer the late night, which I reserved for emergencies, but was now the early morning—soon after daybreak.

The next help which I should suggest would be the use of cards or slips of paper and a pencil, and, therefore, the habit of having these things ready at hand, in the pocket when you walk, in the sitting-room when you are there, and by the bedside in your bedroom. This is especially valuable, if not indispensable, if you have not a very good memory, and if you adopt (as I advise you to) the plan of telling yourself quietly to collect ideas on a given subject. For then your mind will reach out for these ideas, and you cannot tell when it will catch new ideas. You must be ready at any moment, without fussing. If you have the cards and pencil always at hand, it is absolutely impossible for you to miss any notion.

Another help is discussion. I use this term rather freely. It may include explanation of ideas to others. Nothing makes ideas so clear to yourself, nothing makes you realise how little you know, so well as the attempt to teach others. Listen to what others say, read what they write, and yourself write. It need not be for publication, but, suppose you cannot get any one to listen to you, then you can pretend that you are writing for the press.

Read, but do not read till you have thought out the subject first for yourself. Then read all you can. Do not make notes while you are reading, but make notes afterwards.

Write summaries of what you have thought and of what you have heard and of what you have read. Then, if you can, refer to the original, and fill up your summary.

Above all, be absolutely regardless of arrangement, expression, etc. focus your mind on the collection of ideas, not on anything else.

And, once more, write down all the ideas as rapidly as possible, provided your writing is legible and intelligible to yourself.

I suggest here some abbreviations which I have found useful, but first make your own list. Use your inventive faculty.

* * * *

If you cannot think of any, try an easier exercise. What abbreviations would you use for "is equivalent to," "is superior to," "is inferior to," "is the cause of," "is caused by," "is in contrast to," "is in addition to," "is without"? Here are symbols that I use myself. Do not use them if you can think of any better.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|-----|
| is equivalent to | . | . | . | = |
| is superior to | . | | | > |
| is inferior to | | | . | < |
| is the cause of | | | | → |
| is caused by | | | | ← |
| is in contrast to | | | |) (|
| is in addition to | | | | + |
| is without | . | . | . | - |
| ✓ | × | ✓ | × | + |

Then, again, Games and Athletics I should denote by G & A, English Geography by Eng Geog. Such signs are clear to me, though they may be Hebrew to others. My collection of ideas need be clear to me only. It is the final expression of ideas that I wish to be clear to others.

Perhaps it will be useful if I mention briefly a few of the ways in which I prefer to use the cards. I find that I need to use them less and less—the ideas collect and select and arrange themselves more and more without the need of cards or any mechanism of which I am conscious. This, I believe, is because I have first gone through each process very carefully by itself, and have practised it and have made it nearly automatic.

Especially before sleep, I like to suggest to myself that I will collect ideas on such and such a subject or subjects. I do not use the same words. Sometimes I say that I will collect ideas, sometimes I tell myself to collect ideas, but what I always do now is to leave the process to be worked out sub-consciously. That trustful plan might not suit every one equally well.

While I am collecting ideas (and indeed in each process) I try to be as leisurely as possible, except when I am jotting ideas down on paper—then it often seems

necessary to hurry with the hand, though not with the breathing

I attend carefully (at least I used to attend to this matter until I made the attention unnecessary) to the position of the body. I prefer to collect ideas lying down, and very often lying down in bed in the early morning, though an occasional walk or an interval of exercise is a help.

The early morning seems now the best time for work, though, as I have said before, the late night (and the too early morning!) used to be the best time.

I allow intervals after I have collected ideas and again after I have expressed them. Sometimes I find it better to rewrite the whole article to collect, select, etc., all the ideas afresh. I find a growing tendency to this deliberateness, this unwillingness to put into print anything the moment I have written it. It is the same with answering letters.

I have many Essays which I have not yet expressed. I have them on cards, or I have the schemes of them on sheets of paper.

Before I express, and after I have expressed, I try to get new ideas by listening and reading, but in every case I collect ideas of my own before listening or reading, if I possibly can.

I find that, with the cards, there is very little need to rewrite anything. Each process, up to the expression, is done with the greatest ease and with the least trouble.

And, in the said form, the ideas are very easily preserved. Some of my card-packets are loose, others are kept in special Mem.-Holders.

As to the technique of using cards, I offer a few hints here, though it would be better if you first tried to

work out how you would use them, what hints you would give to a beginner who was going to use them.

* * * * *

Brevity is the first consideration, not style. All sorts of abbreviations are invaluable, so long, once again, as they are clear to you—perhaps a week afterwards, or even a year afterwards.

“*One idea, one card*,” is another essential. Most of those who begin to use the card-system write several ideas on a single card. It is utterly false economy. For suppose the two or three ideas, which you have written on the one card, do not come together in your essay, then you have to rewrite them. The following will give some idea of a dozen cards, as I use them. You will notice that even the Sub-Headings have cards to themselves—one Sub-Heading, one card.

Indentation is shown in these samples. A Sub-Heading does not begin on the extreme left, it begins nearer to the right side. This marks it as a Sub-Heading.

The cards are of different sizes, the larger size being for subjects (“What’s in a Game?”), the smaller size for Headings belonging to the subject. The illustration shows the card-holder. Notice how the subject stands out clear above the Headings of ideas which come under it. It is easy to add new ideas by writing them each on a card of its own, and then slipping the cards into the compartment in front of their respective subject.

It would be easy to have different-coloured cards for different purposes—for example, red cards for main

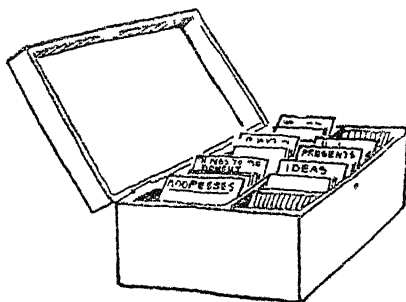
headings, blue cards for objections and fallacies, and so forth

An important factor in the collection of ideas is reading. Work out a few hints on the art of reading

^ , * * x *

CARDS, TO ILLUSTRATE THE CARD-SYSTEM

Subject "What's in a Game?"



For details I must refer to the larger book, "How to Prepare Essays". Here just one or two notions will be sufficient.

Some people read books mainly in order to collect quotations. Now, quotations do serve a very useful purpose—they impress those who look to high authority rather than to logic. But it is not mainly for the sake of quotations that one should read books. It is mainly for the sake of valuable ideas which one can assimilate and then turn to practical use.

Choose books which interest you, and at the same time are good books to read. The best books are,

I believe, those which make you think for yourself. Sometimes I find that a page of a book takes me an hour to read, because it sets me on a number of new lines of thought. This is the type of book that I prefer. Buckle's "History of Civilisation," vol. 1, is a good example.

Before you begin to read, collect your own ideas on the subject. Next ask yourself what you would like the writer to tell you. Then that which you read will not be entirely new to you. Some of the ideas will be already yours. These will be impressed upon you still more deeply by the reading. Other ideas will be new. These will be impressed upon you more deeply because they are fewer in number than they would have been if you had not first thought for yourself. They will not crowd one another out.

After you have read, write a summary. It might be best of all to leave the summary till you have finished the book. This is the way which I have found best with a really good book, such as the above-mentioned (Buckle's "History of Civilisation").

First think of the subject and the ideas, work out the subject for yourself on your own lines freely, then rush through the book quickly. Then read the first few paragraphs and do a brief summary of them, merely collecting ideas, and not expressing them in beautiful style.

Afterwards refer to the book and fill up the gaps in your collection. Then go through your collection again, then read on to the end of the chapter, then summarise the whole chapter, and correct that summary. Afterwards go through your collection of ideas on the first chapter, before you read the second chapter, and

so on, till you have finished the whole book by this accumulation of *Résumé* plan. It may be better for some people to analyse paragraph by paragraph, but to analyse sentence by sentence is, I think, a mistake it does not cultivate the memory sufficiently

Then set aside the book, and try to recall its main ideas afterwards

Be sure to put the good ideas to some use. One idea may suggest an interesting Essay-subject. Work that out. Another idea may suggest an idea for daily life. Work that out too, and put it to the test

All this applies to listening as well

In both reading and listening also it is very important to keep the body in a good position (different people have different good positions for the purpose), and not to use muscles unnecessarily, not to grip or frown or fidget or worry just quietly to let the ideas sink into the mind

Before proceeding to Part II treat Part I. in the same way. Shut this book, collect the ideas which you remember, jot them down (preferably on cards—"one idea, one card"), then open the book and fill in the gaps. Do not begin Part II yet.

After the summary, collect ideas on the subjects treated in Parts II, III, and IV, namely, "England's Geography and England's Greatness," etc. See the following Chapters

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It is essential that you should collect ideas on these subjects, and practise the art of collection, before you begin Part II, for the processes of selecting or rejecting,

and of proportioning, are almost absolutely distinct from the process of collecting ideas.

Indeed, it might be better to take some of the exercises at the end of the book, and work them out as well.

PART II **SELECT OR REJECT, AND PROPORTION IDEAS**

IN this Part, as in Part I, I insist on leisurely reading, and on free thought. I invite suggestions. When I give Correspondence-Courses to individuals, whether on Essay-writing, on Health, or some other subject, I welcome suggestions and criticisms. As an instance, here is one sent me by an Essay-writing pupil. It is the answer to the question, "On what principles would you reject ideas which you had collected?" I summarise the answer here —

"1 First, I choose the point most obvious to most minds. I get the agreement or sympathy of the average reader.

"2 Then I choose the point next in the list—the most obvious point but one. And so on. I go by degrees of known-ness.

"3 I reject what seems likely to spoil my main effect, to obscure my main idea, to distract attention from it, to offend my readers, so that they throw away the writing in disgust, and do not read further.

"4 Therefore I first decide on my main effect—my main idea.

"5 Then I do not shift my one clear point of view.

"6 I also see clearly before me my readers. I decide who it is that I am going to appeal to, whether the editor (or publisher), or the general public, or only a part of the public, or whether I am going to write freely what I think, regardless of any reader at all. I must not write for more than one class."

Now, I do not consider this to be a thoroughly satisfactory answer. In the first place, Nos 1 and 2 belong rather to Arrangement than to Rejection. No 3 is too

sweeping—sometimes the readers need a change and diversion for a moment No 4 is not altogether satisfactory One may have several main ideas, as I have on food, exercise, etc If I pretended that there was one, and only one, best diet for all, I should be unfair. I may have to admit objections to my general conclusion 5 I may have to shift my point of view, if I find that I do not see only one point of view I do not feel bound to abstain from writing till I have all my opinions in one direction, and none in the other As to 6, there are Essays in which one must appeal first to one reader, then to another

But these faults—if they are faults—are unimportant. The important thing has been that this pupil thought freely and suggested freely Any ideas of mine that this pupil read afterwards, she found more helpful than if she had never thought for herself

Ideas for Essay-subjects have already been collected as Headings and Sub-Headings I hope they have been collected on cards, so as to save time in the future processes Whether they have been collected on cards or not, it is a mistake to think now of the collection of ideas (that is over for the present, unless new ideas occur), or to think of the later processes—for instance, the arrangement of ideas.

In the above paragraph, for instance, which I have purposely left unaltered, if it were part of my collection of ideas, or part of my selection of ideas for future expression, I should not bother about the expression, I should leave it as it is Probably, when I came to revise the words at the end, that being the last process of all, I should alter the expression and make it personal

Instead of the abstract expression, I should address you in the second person. But just at present I leave the paragraph as it is, because I want to concentrate my mind on the selection or rejection of ideas.

In this chapter we shall use ideas already collected, and shall select some, reject others, and mark the relative importance of the selected ideas.

Take the Essay-subjects already mentioned. You have the ideas collected. Now select those which you want to use in your Essay, reject the rest.

Then treat in the same way the new subject of this Part, "England's Geography and England's Greatness." This clearly is an Essay on causes and results: you are to consider how far England's greatness has been and is due to England's geography.

Then collect—if you have not already done so—and afterwards select or reject and proportion ideas on the subjects which follow in succeeding Chapters.

* * * * *

Do not hurry to Part III. Master Part II first. And before you begin this Part, collect ideas as to why this Part II. should be confined to one or two processes: why you should select ideas, not while you are collecting them, but after you have collected them, and before you arrange and express them.

* * * * *

The first reason is that the selection or rejection of ideas is a separate process. A man may be able to collect thousands of useful ideas, but it does not in the least follow that he will have the tact to select those which are best for any particular purpose, nor that he will have the courage or sense to reject the rest, any more

than it follows that he will be able to arrange the ideas, or to express them clearly, forcibly, etc

Besides the fact that the process is separate, that a man may excel in it and fail in all the rest of the processes, or, *vice versa*, may fail in it and excel in all the rest of the processes, to concentrate on a separate process brings with it easier work, more successful work, and, I think, better mental training

Most people, however, try to do several things at once. They pay no particular attention to selecting or rejecting ideas, except while they are writing the Essay itself, or after they have finished writing it. Now, while they are writing the Essay, they ought to be thinking of the expression—goodness knows, it demands enough thought for any mind of the ordinary type! It is a mistake for them to think of the rejection while they should be thinking of the expression. It is not so great a mistake to think of the rejection after they have finished the expression, but what a waste of time! For, if they are going to reject an idea, why express it fully first? Far the easiest way is to reject it while it is still an idea, perhaps denoted by one or two words

Now, on what principles would you select some ideas and reject others, in this Essay on "England's Geography and England's Greatness"? Other Essays might demand entirely different selections or rejections

* * * * *

The first principle, perhaps, is to realise the difficulty. There is a certain *amour propre* in connection with ideas which one has collected for one's self. How reluctantly a child at the seaside throws away the pebbles which it has collected: the mere collection seems to have made the pebbles the child's very own, almost the child's own

citation But in selecting or rejecting ideas you must give up your *amour propre*, and take on a new point of view, which we may call *amour des lecteurs* (consideration for your readers) You must come outside yourself and enter into your readers' thoughts

There are two ways of doing this One is to be cold-blooded by nature, unemotional with regard to yourself, at least in this particular respect, else you will be too pleased with your own collection of ideas to reject any, they will all seem so very good! The other way is to leave an interval How often we have done something in which we took the greatest pride at the time, then afterwards have seen it, and have wondered how we could ever have admired it This interval will work marvels in giving us perspective The poised mind will be able to throw off its work, and at once regard the work as the work of another At once the writer will cease to be himself, except for the blue pencil in his hand he will become the future reader Then he will carry out the rejection smoothly

Selection or rejection does not depend entirely on one principle No hard and fast rules, I think, can be laid down

In lecturing at Cambridge, for example, I have sometimes had an audience of pupils who knew their work so well that I could bring before them one idea after another, then I could deal safely with twenty or thirty ideas in the hour Before another audience I was compelled to confine myself to two or three ideas at the most, playing the variations on them

And, needless to say, time and space are important factors Ideas which one could deal with easily in an hour one would find far too numerous for a five minutes'

talk. An article in the *Nineteenth Century* and a paragraph in the *Daily Mail*, a lecture to a learned institution and a two minutes' speech after dinner, demand entirely different selections and rejections. It is extremely important for the writer to think how much time or space he has at his disposal, and to rehearse, as it were, with himself as a hearer or reader, before he starts to select or reject.

I used to have a simple way myself. It may or may not be of any use. I very soon came to know, after using cards for a year, how large a stack of cards would take a quarter of an hour to dictate. That would be nearly the same pace as speaking, though rather slower, and perhaps would be equivalent to a thousand words. So that, if I was preparing a speech for a quarter of an hour, or a column in the *Daily Mail*, I could judge about the right length by the height of the stack of cards.

It is not entirely a matter of time or space. It is, as I hinted just now, a matter of the intelligence, and, generally, the character and characteristics of the readers or hearers. Writing for learned specialists on a subject like Free Trade or Bimetallism, one would take a great deal of knowledge for granted. Writing for a schoolboy or an ordinary person, one would take nothing for granted, one would be extremely clear as to the foundations. But the essential point is to be the reader and hearer, and not one's self, while one is selecting or rejecting, proportioning, arranging, and expressing ideas, and yet still to keep one's own individuality.

A writer must be individual in his purpose. One writes his article in order to amuse his readers. Another writes his article on the same subject in order to advertise himself, and so forth. You must clearly settle at the

start what you wish the effect of your Essay to be. There was, I remember, at school a special type of Latin Prose Composition unlike anything that ever a Latin author wrote. The object of it was to secure marks in examinations. Now, if I wished to secure marks in examinations, that was the style I ought to have chosen. If I wished to write real Latin such as Cicero wrote, then I should have chosen an altogether different style. You must keep in view in your mind's eye a certain goal to be reached. You need not rush directly towards it, regardless of obstacles, but you must at least zigzag towards it. If you are going to convince a special set of readers, then you must ask yourself continually whether such-and-such ideas will be likely to convince them, or perhaps only to alienate them or confuse them.

In the same way, you must be individual in proportioning ideas which you have selected. Whether you reject an idea or not, will depend a great deal on whether you think it will obscure your main point or not. Suppose you have a capital idea on the subject of "England's Geography and England's Greatness," suppose you think of a certain district—say the North-Country district—where manufacturing towns seem to have altered the character of the population, the manufacturing towns being due to the coal and iron which were part of the Geography of England,—now, whether you mention this or enlarge upon it, depends chiefly upon the time and space at your disposal, and the character and characteristics of your readers, and your own objects, and your opinion as to whether there are not some more important ideas which the mention of this would obscure.

And you must be original, and perfectly fearless too, in selecting those ideas which are truthful *and* fair. The

two qualities do not always go together. Many a lie has been spoken by a person telling the truth, many a truth has been spoken by a person telling a lie, so far as mere words are concerned. Suppose that a man is habitually sober, taking a glass of beer once a week. Suppose that on a certain occasion he drank his glass of beer, but did not know that there was in it a little snuff, and then became intoxicated. Now, it would be perfectly true, so far as mere words are concerned, to say that he was once intoxicated, but it would be unfair. On the other hand, it might be untrue to tell some story of how he resisted all attempts to make him drink more than one glass of beer. Perhaps no one ever tried to persuade him, but the refusal might have been quite typical of the man, and a fair example to invent, though not absolute fact. When scandal is talked about people, every word of the scandal may be true, yet the mention of it in a particular way, or the mention of it at all, may be unfair.

Besides truthfulness and fairness there is the test of usefulness. Here, once more, the reader must be in the writer's mind. The works of Daudet and Zola may be to certain readers the very reverse of useful. I suppose that it would be possible to get more absolutely divergent opinions as to Daudet's "Sapho"—its usefulness or harmfulness—than as to any other book. To some it is horribly suggestive, to others it is effectively deterrent.

Now, I know that most readers of this book will object strongly to this analysis. They will say, "Surely we may trust our own genuine and individual instinct to select or reject ideas?" I am not sure that this is at all a safe course with ordinary people, because the proper selection or rejection of an idea involves the consideration

of the reader or listener, it means sympathy, which is not a common quality of ordinary writers.

And to go through these reasons why one should select or reject this or that idea, need not prevent the selection or rejection from being genuine and individual. The ideas which you select may be original or not. If you trace them back, you will probably find that you owe them to some one else. In this subject of "England's Geography and England's Greatness" you may owe them to Buckle. Or, from another point of view, when you read Emerson's Essay on Self-Reliance, you may come to the conclusion that the ideas were your own, and that all that Emerson did was to remind you of some of them. It does not matter in the least whether you invented the idea or not. Perhaps, if you knew the truth, you would find that the Egyptians invented it thousands of years ago, and some other people before them. What is essential is that every idea should pass through your own mind and should be assimilated by you before you give it out again as yours. If you go through Vergil, you find sentence after sentence which reminds you of Homer or Sophocles, yet it is not Homer or Sophocles translated into Latin, it is Vergil. Vergil has passed the ideas through his own mind first.

You are not bound to reject absolutely all ideas which you do not believe in. You can quote them as ideas which are held by certain people. You can put them before the readers, asking what they think. You can refute the ideas. But do not be a mere echo, do not pass on an idea as if you were a mountain sending back an echo, refuse to belong to the vast class of echo-makers.

The process of selecting certain ideas will be the

process of rejecting the opposites—the ideas for which you have no time or space, the ideas unsuited for the intelligence or characteristics of your audience, unsuited to your objects, likely to obscure important ideas, unfruitful or unfair, useless or harmful, and not properly understood and realised by yourself

Are there any other reasons why you should reject any ideas that you have collected? You are generally told that there should be a further criterion—Unity, that all ideas not tending in the direction of your one main aim and motive and point of view are to be kept out or taken out. I am not at all sure that this is a good dogma for every one. For those who are perfectly certain that their one main aim and motive and point of view is absolutely sound and objectionable, well and good. But what of most people? Surely most people are not so convinced? And if they are not so convinced, if they have several aims and motives and points—if, for instance, a writer is beginning to change his diet to a fleshless one, and sees many advantages and some disadvantages—what is the fair plan? I feel strongly that there is plenty of room for human Essays confessing honestly ignorance and wavering. Where ignorance is real, 'tis lying to be sure.

Under three out of the four last classes of ideas to be rejected, you may treat the vast class of fallacies. As an exercise, imagine yourself about to discourse on fallacies. Imagine the discourse to be allowed only five minutes or ten minutes. Now collect ideas on fallacies, and select some and reject others, so that the selected ideas will take five or ten minutes to explain. Think of a special set of hearers—for instance, a class of domestic servants whom you have been asked to address in the evening

after family prayers, or a class of schoolboys between the ages of fourteen and fifteen

When you are collecting these ideas about fallacies, I think your best plan will be not to bother about selection or rejection of anything else, not to bother about unity at all, except that all your ideas must be about fallacies. That will give the Essay unity. When you have collected your ideas, then perhaps, for a brief discourse like this, it would be best for you to take an underlying principle—for instance, to show how a certain number of fallacies are due to omission. Some say that England's greatness was entirely due to her geography, they omit that part of her greatness which was due to her great individual leaders. Some say that the Greeks were civilised, as we have seen, they omit the thousands of Greeks who were not civilised, the Greeks outside the civilised cities, they omit many of the women and slaves inside the civilised cities. But do not trouble about this grouping of ideas while you are collecting ideas, let the grouping be reserved for the processes of selection and rejection and arrangement.

Here are a few Headings and Sub-Headings for an Essay on "England's Geography and England's Greatness." You have already collected your own list, now add to it any of mine that you have not collected for yourself. Then go through the list twice.

First cross out lightly with a pencil the ideas which you would reject for a long Essay.

Then cross out lightly with a pen the ideas which you would reject for a short Essay—say an Essay of five hundred words.

Or, if you like, put one asterisk before the ideas

which you would reject for a long Essay, two asterisks before the ideas which you would reject for a short Essay.

*A few Headings and Sub-Headings collected for an Essay on
"England's Geography and England's Greatness"*

N B—These ideas are not selected, nor arranged, etc., they are merely collected

England's neighbours fusion of races owing to England's nearness to many peoples—Teutonic, Celtic, etc (cp early fusion of Italian races in Rome) England has usually welcomed foreign settlers Rule by Norman kings (cp Rome's early rule by Etruscan kings)

Struggles against many neighbours (cp Rome's early struggles) kept the people alert and trained

Boundaries the sea made and kept her partly naval, yet comparatively safe from Continental invasions and quarrels

Shape much sea-coast encouraged naval life also, and supplied food, and affected the climate, keeping it somewhat damp

Size small, hence compact

Scenery and surface there is great variety—lakes, rivers, plains, hills, valleys, forests, etc

The soil is rich, and admits of varied products and cattle

Below the soil is abundance of coal and metal, leading to wealth through manufacture and machinery, as well as to quick transit by ships, steamers, trains, etc. Hence the extension of the trade empire

Air and climate seldom extreme (contrast New York), but rather encouraging a dogged resisting spirit, and perhaps compelling us to exercise for the sake of health

Variety The agricultural life would tend (*see* Buckle) to conservatism and absolute rule by one or a few, the naval and the manufacturing (town) life would tend to open-mindedness and independence, yet also, on the other hand, to wealth in the possession of a few, and to power in their possession too

Variety in the air and climate—*eg* contrast the slower South with the quicker North—would lead to very different natures, to say nothing of the varied blood and the varied occupations

These are only a few ideas out of many

On the other hand, there are the great men and women, or at least the effectual men and women—King Alfred, Queen Elizabeth, and the statesmen, generals, admirals, scientists, etc. These have had an influence as well as geography, though Carlyle's statement—that the history of a people is the history of its great men—is absurd when one studies the masses of English men and English women.

The Fallacies could be exposed

The Effects could be considered in more detail, viz —

(a) On the individual physically and hygienically, æsthetically, spiritually, intellectually, economically, etc (see List in Part I)

(b) On war, Government, religion, etc (see List in Part I)

In the longer Essay, for a certain class of readers, I should perhaps select only—

(1) The Neighbours

(2) The Sea-boundary

(3) The North Country and Midlands, and their wood, coal, and metal—hence their towns, their wealth, their liberal tendencies (*see* Buckle)

In the shorter Essay, for a certain class of readers, I should perhaps select only (3), or else only the Air and Climate

But make your own selection and rejection freely, after studying the above principles

Now, how will you proportion the ideas which you have selected? On what principles will you mark one idea as very important, another idea as rather important, another idea as only just worth mentioning?

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Here again, you must be cold-blooded, and see your own ideas in due perspective, or else you must leave an interval

Here again, you must consider your readers rather than yourself. It is not merely a matter of what you consider important, but what you want them to con-

side: important, what you can make them consider important

You will not get a better study here than the New Testament. When Jesus was addressing an audience, there were a thousand and one things that he might have chosen to say. Why did he say this, and not that? His teaching is a lesson for all time. He kept in view not only what he considered the highest truths, but also what he wished his particular audience to know and do, and what he thought that these individuals were likely to know and do. Again and again he must have rejected or put in the background or reserved till the end what he knew to be the pearls of his discourse.

Now, what is the technique of proportioning? You are not going to express your selected ideas yet, you have not arranged them yet. First, you are going to mark importance. How would you do this?

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Of course you would do it partly by the expression itself. If you consider that the air and climate and atmosphere of England, the absence of extreme heat and extreme cold, the dampness, and so forth, have helped to make England great or the reverse, if you consider them a very vital reason, then, when you come to the expression, you will give them prominence by various means. But we have not come to the expression yet. We are still considering which ideas you are going to express more or less emphatically later on.

Here it will be enough to underline. You can leave unimportant ideas unmarked, you can put one line under rather important ideas, two lines under very important, three lines under most important, or you can use wavy lines to mark most important ideas.

Or perhaps you would prefer to write important ideas in capitals, or to put a circle round them, or to underline them with red or blue pencil. Think of all the ways, and choose your own.

You may, perhaps, prefer to use coloured cards, or to put a single cross in one corner for a rather important idea, two crosses for a more important idea, and so forth. Think of any other ways which you could employ to mark emphasis before you come to the expression.

As an exercise, take these ideas, collected on the subject of "The Causes of Rome's Success in conquering Italy." They are only a few out of many ideas, they are, in fact, only the selected ideas. Now, with perfect freedom, underline those ideas according to their importance. I cannot venture to guess which ideas will receive the three lines under them. I should be very sorry to influence you. I should rather that you thought out the ideas and then judged for yourself.

* * * * *

Some Headings for an Essay on "The Causes of Rome's Success in conquering Italy" (see "How to Prepare Essays")

Geography *e.g.* Rome was situated off the sea, yet on a river, and where three peoples met, near the centre of the Italian coast, away from the attacks of the Greeks in the East.

Etruscan kings ruled her at one time, and united and "civilised" her.

Mixture of population

Colonies planted in conquered or still unconquered land, and tending to Romanise the surrounding people

Roads leading from Rome to various towns, not from town to town

Extension of rights by degrees to conquered and allied peoples.

Alliances judiciously arranged

Treachery.

Isolation of the conquered (except for close connection with Rome) and of enemies

Enemies themselves weak (past their prime, or not yet in their prime)

Gradual progress assimilation of the old before the new was attacked

Family life, the father being supreme this accustomed the Romans to discipline

Organisation of state religion, of war, of law

Character of the Romans solid, relentless, etc.

Unity of the people, partly due to concessions by the rulers

Senate a splendid body of rulers representative, experienced, etc

Slaves to do much of the necessary 'menial' work, and leave the Romans free to fight, till the land, etc

Then there were the great men

Out of this list select some ideas first for a long, then for a short Essay

* * * * *

For a long one, I might perhaps select Geography, Colonies, Gradual Progress, Family Life

For a short one, with certain readers in view, I might select Senate and Slaves, and some great men

Now, take the subjects in the following Parts (*e.g.* Poverty) I hope you have already collected your ideas on these, as an exercise on Part I. If not, then collect them now, and, as an exercise on Part II, select some ideas, reject the rest, and proportion the selected ideas by underlinings

In working through this book, it is impossible to avoid exercises on Part I as well as on Part II or III or IV or V. Part I, the collection of ideas, is bound to assert itself throughout, if you are to think out things for yourself and not take them ready-made from me. In doing the special essay of Part II, you will have been forced to collect ideas on Geography. The above list

(p 49) will have shown a certain number of these ideas, such as —

Neighbours

Boundaries

Shape

Size

Surface (which will include Scenery—rivers, mountains, etc)

Products, above and below the soil

Population and its classes (how distributed in cities or county, etc)

Air and Climate

Variety or Monotony

Absence of certain features

PART III. ARRANGE THE SELECTED IDEAS

YOU have now collected, selected, and proportioned (especially by underlining) ideas on a number of subjects, especially "What's in a Game?" "England's Geography and England's Greatness," and "Poverty" Now arrange these ideas as a scheme, and especially arrange the ideas on "Poverty"—that will be the subject of this Part.

A Few Selected Headings for an Essay on "Poverty"

Add your own ideas, make your own selection, underline the important ideas, then arrange the ideas with a view to an Essay to a working-men's club

N B—In your scheme, copy out each idea on a card of its own

Evidences very misleading, as so much more depends on what the money is spent on, than on how much money there is

Examples from the East End, the "gentle" poor, those in debt, etc

Description examine different localities, classes and groups, kinds of poverty, etc

Changes prevalence of hospitals, workhouses, "charity," etc, in contrast to the time when the poor died out

Causes and helps these things, ignorance and lack of education, bad seasons, inventions and want of occupation for men used to only one work, foreign importations, foreign immigrants, crowding into cities, ill-health, immorality, drink, inherited poverty, cheating by others, etc.

Hindrances some of the opposites to these, namely, better education, good seasons, new occupations (*e.g.* physical culture), foreign exports, emigration, 'back to the land' movements, better health, self-control, temperance, etc

Good effects kills off some of the diseased and weak and immoral, spurs on other people to energy, brings out character

Bad effects kills off some of the fit and clever and sober, crushes some, leads to careless despair, crime, etc

Compare a cold plunge, which may be a tonic if the person has a good reaction, compare also the effects of "a hard game to win" Compare also poverty in other countries.

Contrast an enervating warm bath, contrast also luxury, and poverty in other countries

Expose fallacies especially that a nation is rich because it has some rich men, poor because its average of possessions is small so much depends on how the individual uses poverty (or wealth)

It is obvious, I think, that these ideas would make a very long Essay—far too long an Essay for most purposes. Certainly in a short Essay the selected headings might be for some readers —

Fallacies.

An example (a poor man whose character has been made by poverty, *e.g.* Benjamin Franklin)

Good effects

A comparison of two

Afterwards arrange the ideas on the subjects which follow (see p 64)

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Be sure not to hurry on to Part IV. Concentrate on the arrangement of ideas; do not trouble about their expression. Once again, recollect why it is worth while to arrange ideas as a separate process. The answer will be very much like the answer given in Part I.

Note here that most people, when they are expressing their ideas, express them in paragraphs, of which the

length is decided not by any real reason, except a general feeling that the paragraph has lasted quite long enough, if not too long. "Surely it is time I began a fresh paragraph," the writer thinks, half unconsciously. Now this is obviously a mistake, it is too haphazard. And yet it is a very hard mistake to avoid. You can go far towards avoiding it by spending time on the arrangement of ideas. A beautiful scheme will fall easily into paragraphs. In fact, one might almost say that the paragraphing is to be decided mainly by the scheme—that it results naturally from a good scheme itself.

Now on what principles, if any, did you arrange your selected ideas? Or, if you did not arrange them on any definite principles, on what definite principles could you have arranged them?

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Here, as in the selection and proportioning of ideas, much depends on your time and space. If you have half an hour for your Speech, or two pages for your Essay, then you must guide your arrangement accordingly. Your arrangement will not be the same as if you had five minutes or an hour for your Speech, or one page or fifteen pages for your Essay.

Then, again, there are the readers or the hearers. Are they poor or rich? Are they foolish or intelligent? With a foolish audience a strictly logical arrangement might be quite the wrong one, quite the right one might be an apparently haphazard scheme, such as Demosthenes so often used. He would begin to talk about this or that, then lead on to his main theme—for instance, that the Athenians should serve in person, should form the bulk of the army, or should man the ships against Philip of Macedon. At first there seems

to be no arrangement at all. Then there appears the cleverest arrangement of all—the arrangement suited to the particular audience, an arrangement which might not be in the least appropriate if Demosthenes were lecturing to an assembly of schoolmasters or Fellows of Colleges at a University. As an example of an apparently haphazard arrangement, take the familiar passage from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt vii 15-27). See “How to Prepare Essays”

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one, therefore, that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.”

Take this passage, and say what the subject was; then analyse the arrangement. Is there any arrangement at all, or is the matter put together anyhow?

Probably the effect was the best possible Study the mechanism, and see if you can tell why

* * * * *

Remember the mixed audience in the open air, the audience composed chiefly of working-men Remember the brief time Remember also the object of the speaker—not to amuse, but to explain, instruct, reform Think why a more “logical” arrangement would have been wrong under these conditions

The arrangement will depend not only upon the time and space, upon the characteristics of the audience, and upon the objects of the writer or speaker, but also upon the proportion of importance In the Essay on “Poverty,” or perhaps in the part of it which treats of the causes of poverty alone, what do you consider most important? Perhaps ignorance Very well, let the importance of that idea be shown by your arrangement Where will you put it? You will probably put it first, or last, or both You might also allude to it in the middle But you will see at once that you cannot arrange your ideas satisfactorily till you have collected, selected, and proportioned

The question arises, Where are you to put the least important, the weakest ideas? As a general rule, I should say, put them on both sides of the middle of the Essay They will not be noticed so much there. That is the best place for what we may call “padding”

Perhaps the two most important principles of arrangement, however, are not these, but the arrangement by groups. In the Essay on “The Causes of Rome’s Success in conquering Italy,” there appear three main groups, first, Geography and its effects, then Rome’s external relations with enemies, allies, etc., then Rome’s internal

characteristics—*e.g.* family life. So you will find that the causes of poverty will fall into groups, and that there are many ways of deciding these groups. You might adopt here an arrangement similar to the arrangement of the causes of Rome's success. First, the effects of geography and circumstances and environment generally, then the way in which the person deals with things outside himself, then the way in which he deals with himself, and especially his health and the state of his mind.

That is one of the main principles—the grouping of kindred ideas into a big class.

Then there is the principle of connection. Within any given group you should, as a rule, put next to one another the ideas which are most closely connected with one another. For example, in that same Essay-subject on Rome's success, belonging to group No. 2—namely, how Rome dealt with others outside herself—you have such Headings as Roads, Colonies, Extension of Rights. These could come together. How close was the connection between roads and colonies? The Roman roads led from Rome to the colonies, knitting colonies to Rome, not knitting colony to colony. Then the colonies were one of the means by which Rome extended her rights—she turned captured people into colonies, she put colonies on the frontiers of the enemy's land, by means of them—some of them purely Roman at the core—she romanised other people, extending her rights in that way. This marks the connection between the headings inside a group. And, working still further in the same direction, we must arrange Sub-Headings also on the same plan, putting next to each other those which are most clearly linked together or most easily linked together.

There is another kind of connection, and that is between the different groups

How shall we pass from the second group to the third? How shall we pass from the way in which Rome dealt with others to the way in which Rome behaved internally—her customs, etc.? A good plan is to find a heading under Group 2, which will lead naturally to a heading under Group 3, so that, although you mark the distinction between the groups, you still weld them together

You will find it the same later on with words. You must, as a rule, connect together words which go closely with one another, adverbs going closely with their verbs, except when you need special emphasis or when you need a change

Now, as an example in arrangement of ideas, take the ideas on Poverty, at first take the Causes only, and arrange them for this particular purpose in groups and headings belonging to groups. Try to make the transitions from heading to heading easy and smooth. Then take the other groups (*e.g.* Effects). Link the parts of each group together, link each group to the next group. How will you arrange these Headings under the group of Causes of Poverty? Write each on a separate card, arrange the cards, note links between each card and the next, then link the last card to the second group (the Effects of Poverty)

Prevalence of hospitals, workhouses, "charity"

Ignorance and lack of education

Bad seasons.

Inventions, and want of occupation for men used to only one work

Foreign importations (raw materials and manufactures)

Foreign immigrants, able to live more cheaply
 Crowding into cities
 Ill-health
 Immorality
 Drink
 Inherited poverty
 Cheating by others
 Objection to earn money in dishonest or degrading
 ways
 Hampering marriage.

Please do not be guided by the following arrangement, as if it were better than your own. For certain purposes it would be far from a good arrangement. It is only one out of many choices

* Ignorance and lack of education. This applies not only to the poor themselves, but also to the well-to-do, who, instead of helping people to help themselves, ignorantly rely on—

Hospitals, workhouses, "charity." These are really forms of laziness. So is also the free permission of—

Foreign immigration. Foreigners can (or do) live more cheaply than English people, who are lavish and thriftless. This thriftlessness tells most fatally in—

Bad seasons, and when

Inventions throw men and women out of work. Men and women are also thrown out of work owing to—

Foreign importations *eg* of cheap matches, metal goods, etc. Besides, there is great competition in a small area in

City life, which, till people know how to adapt themselves to it, tends to—

Ill-health, especially due to clogging of the system

by foul air, wrong food, insufficient exercise, etc. This clogging and consequent discomfort is one reason of—

“Drink,” which, besides being expensive in every way, often leads to—

Immorality, a potent cause of poverty. Sometimes the want of self-control leads to a—

Hampering marriage, and the need to support a family

Inherited poverty is very common. But all the above causes are not nearly adequate to account for all the poverty we see. We must remember, also, the poverty due not so much to folly as to conscience, *etc.*—

An objection to making money by cheating others, sometimes, also, it is due to—

Having been cheated by others

There are some who think that arrangement should not be taught separately, because—they say—people “naturally” arrange ideas very nicely, or because certain Essays have been praised as Essays, and, therefore, must be fairly well arranged, and because it is a mistake to have a cut-and-dried method of arrangement. Now, the answer to this objection is, first of all, that the ordinary (which is here called the “natural”) arrangement of ideas is not, as a rule, satisfactory, that essays may be praised generally, perhaps because they have a good collection or selection of ideas, or good expression of ideas. It does not in the least follow that because they are praised generally as Essays therefore they have good arrangement. And, as to the third objection, it is based on a misconception. I insist at the beginning that there is no one cut-and-dried arrangement. But there are certain important principles which must not be ignored. And a person should anyhow know to what group a

given idea belongs, even if he likes to put that idea outside the group, for some special reason

As an Essay in criticism and re-arrangement, take the following ideas on the mental and moral results of games, their lessons and their dangers. Here are ideas sent me by one of my correspondence-pupils. They are not intended to be arranged in order, but it would be as well for the reader to criticise them as if they were intended to be arranged ready for expression —

"Moral Lessons from Games"

- "(1) Wholesome self-assertion,
- "(2) Self-reliance
- "(3) Self-appraisalment
- "(4) Altruistic regard for 'side'
- "(5) Consideration and generosity to partners and opponents alike
- "(6) A love of and understanding of fair-play principles
- "(7) Power of discrimination, of judgment, and of being prompt
- "(8) Readiness to act on impulse
- "(9) Power of concentration
- "(10) Regard for the rights of others and for one's own rights.

"Dangers"

- "(1) Want of proportion in giving games their place in life
- "(2) Failure to realise the differences between an ordinary game and the game of life
- "(3) Tendency to exaggerated self-reliance or exaggerated self-respect (conceit)
- "(4) Tendency to allow physical enjoyment of games to take possession of one as with a kind of intoxication
- "(5) Dwelling on the physical, as in games, may be detrimental to the spiritual in man or woman. Instance materialism of later Greece and Rome, following on their exaggerated care of the body."

Now rearrange these ideas in groups. First take the "Moral Lessons"

I offer the following as one out of many possible redistributions —

- Wholesome self-valuation (3)
 - self-reliance (2)
 - self-assertion (1)
 - regard for one's own rights (10)
- Power of concentration (9)
- Power of discrimination
 - judgment
 - being prompt (7)
 - readiness to act on impulse (8)
- Regard for the rights of others (10)
 - altruistic regard for "side" (4)
 - consideration and generosity to partners (5)
 - consideration and generosity to opponents (5)
 - a love of and understanding of fair-play principles (6)

Rearrange the "Dangers" Again, mine is only one of many possible redistributions

- Failure to realise the difference (2)
- Tendency to exaggerated self-reliance or exaggerated self-respect (conceit) (3)
- Tendency to allow physical enjoyment of games to take possession of one as with a kind of intoxication (4).
- Dwelling on the physical . (5)
- Want of proportion (1)

Here is another essay, on "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Competitive Examinations," from Skipton's volume in the Civil Service Series Take this scheme, and commend or criticise the arrangement Then analyse it, and try your own arrangement

"Advantages"

"The old system was bad Men of little education had by seniority risen to posts they were unfit for In the army the ignorance of officers was notorious 'Punch's' chaff about their bad spelling had led to the 'Preliminary'

WAYS IN THE MAKING

Now gets the coveted prize, whereas under the old system the man with most interest and ability came to the front poor but clever men, who must have been absolutely necessary as the only means of selecting the best and nomination are gone, and in the eyes of the public the law of the world, these examinations are the best way of getting the ablest men

"Disadvantages

In the Indian Civil and Army, the old system worked well. Men, let in by competition, naturally' instincts, have been social and judicial

Length is needed, and this competition does not

There are no test for judgment, discretion, temper, and sagacity

They get the men who mature slowly and surely, and get the best, well-crammed, receptive men whose abilities

Lead to cramming and overwork, and thus the system injures his health in acquiring ill-digested knowledge soon forgotten

Those who won and saved India were not competition

It produced crammers, and so the higher examinations require special preparation

They get men who are too clever for their work and time. These often do Press work, and reveal State secrets. Mr. Arnold said he gave the highest marks in the examination to a man whom he would not have appointed

Mr. Arnold said that in France these examinations have increased the number of the incompetent, increased the second-rate, and decreased the first-rate civil servants

"Proposed Remedy

Ministerial patronage to some extent for the Home

"2 Confine a large percentage of appointments to candidates who have been nominated by civil servants, army officers (majors and upwards), or heads of departments, and who have passed the Preliminary This is practically the method adopted for the Navy and Diplomatic Service"

The arrangement will depend on the above conditions—time and space, the characteristics of the readers, the object or objects of the writer, his opinion as to the relative importance of the ideas. It will depend also on the groups to which ideas naturally belong, and the connections between one idea and another.

But there are cases where such grouping is difficult or undesirable, and where the connections are not obvious, perhaps are scarcely existent. What can we do, then? Suppose we have, under the Heading of "The Causes of Poverty," a group of ideas—say, "The state of the poor person's mind"—which seem a collection of ideas belonging under one Heading, the mind, but not clearly connected one with another—for instance, ignorance, want of resolution, forgetfulness, self-satisfaction, etc.

One good plan is to do what I have just done—to gather up the Headings in a *résumé*, and then to say something to this effect—"Not only are there these causes at work, but there is also the following to be taken into account." Then by the sheer neighbourhood, contiguity, association of ideas, the reader keeps the group of ideas in his mind. Another plan is to summarise the ideas before you give them in detail.

In the larger work on "How to Prepare Essays," I have described the former, the *Résumé* plan, as follows—Suppose you have a group of six headings—A, B, C, D, E, F. A, B, C are easily connected together, so are E and F, but C and D, and D and E, are not, they

seem to be isolated. You can begin by saying that you are going to deal with these headings—A, B, C, D, E, F. Then you deal with A, B, C easily. Before passing on to D you say, 'Not only were A, B, and C causes, there was yet another cause, namely, D.' Then you describe D. Similarly, you go on to say, 'Besides A, B, C, and D, there was a further cause, namely, E.' By this means you weld together in the reader's mind those ideas which otherwise would be straggling loose and very likely forgotten.

Now, how far is it safe to be original and free and, as it were, careless in one's arrangement? How far can one disregard such hints as the above?

It is only the genius who can safely be individual with perfect freedom. Learners can only be individual within certain limits. It is so in Cricket and everything else. Average people must master certain mechanisms before they are at liberty to work without conscious thought.

And they must modify what they regard as individuality by studying good models. Take a good model, think about his subject, jot down your own ideas, then read his Essay, write down the ideas you can remember, each idea on its own card, go through the Essay again, and fill in the gaps, shuffle the cards, then rearrange them in your own order, then study the arrangement of the essayist. It does not in the least follow that the essayist has the best possible order for your purpose—or for his. Thousands of essayists have written good ideas, have written clearly, and so forth, while all the time their arrangement has been execrable. I think, however, that you will generally find a hint which will help you. In this way you could read the essays of Francis Bacon,

PART III ARRANGE THE SELECTED IDEAS 69

Samuel Johnson, Montaigne, Alexander Pope, Sir Richard Steel, Jonathan Swift, etc.

In these and other essayists (you will find an excellent volume published by Blackie and Son, called "English Essayists") take special note of the interesting beginnings, which we shall deal with in the next Part

Having arranged your ideas, how will you connect them? A few words on the subject of connections have already been offered incidentally.

* * * * *

The best connection is the order itself, one Heading passing smoothly on into another For this purpose you must arrange your ideas in classes, and keep together those members of classes which have something in common

The cards with Sub-Headings will be very useful here You can arrange them as you would a hand at whist, without any re-writing

Besides the arrangement, there are links to be used As an example, take the Headings of the present Essay-subject—Poverty—as they are collected, and try to find a link between each Heading and the next, just as the Headings stand As a rule, you will have great difficulty in discovering a Sub-Heading of one Heading which will lead you to a Sub-Heading of the next But make the attempt One of the best-known of Memory Systems, the Pelman, includes the art of linking together words which otherwise may be unconnected, for instance, it happens that you wish to remember a list of people or things in a certain order—a list of kings and queens, or of battles, or of laws, etc There seems to be no link of meaning between one word and the next How are you to remember the two? How are you to connect

them together? If you take a word like "Pelman," and wish to link that to the word "memory," how are you to do it? Part of the Pelman System is to find links. Perhaps the links might be as follows "Pelman" suggests the word "man" by similarity of sound, "man" suggests "men" as the plural of the same word, and "men" suggests "memory" by similarity of sound. Or "Pelman" might suggest "pelt" by similarity of sound, "pelt" suggests "rain," "rain" suggests "remember umbrella" (the connections here are very clear), "remember" suggests "memory."

Now this seems artificial, but a similar principle is to be applied when you are connecting one heading with another. As a general rule, if one heading does not naturally lead to the other, then you must find some link.

As to the technique of arrangement, I have already suggested cards. Why should they be particularly useful here?

* * * * *

In the first place, if you are going to write each idea on a separate card, then, when you are collecting the ideas, you will not have to bother about arrangement. The arrangement, you know, will be easy enough, because you can arrange and rearrange the separate cards.

There will be no rewriting. If you write down the ideas, which you collect, on a sheet of paper, then, to get your final scheme, you must rewrite these ideas in the proper order. With cards you are saved this trouble.

And the arrangement is very easy. And not only the arrangement, but also the rearrangement. It often happens in an Essay that, as you think over the subject, after you have collected the ideas, and perhaps after you

have written the Essay itself, some new scheme occurs to you. In the essay on "The Causes of Poverty," for instance, you may have thought the central cause at first to be Geography. As you consider the matter, it may seem to you that the central cause is not Geography, but rather Ignorance. That may compel you to rearrange the materials. It is quite a simple matter to rearrange the cards, it is far from a simple matter to rearrange the written scheme.

As an example, I would put some of the ideas on Poverty, as they would occur, on cards. You will see at once how easy it is to arrange and rearrange these cards. You will see some of the ideas on p. 55 and following.

* * * * *

Once again, you may find it very helpful to use coloured cards for main ideas. That will help the arrangement. You may use red cards for advantages, blue cards for disadvantages, green for causes, and so forth. Personally, I prefer plain cards throughout, but different ways suit different minds.

If you choose to collect your ideas on pages or large slips, then I think the process is not so easy. You can then arrange the Headings by numbers, writing up against each Heading its number—1, 2, 3, 4, etc.

Or you can take a Heading and put it in a new place by a wavy line.

Sub-Headings will be marked by indentation. When you collect an idea which is not a main idea, then, whether you are writing it on a card or on a sheet, write it "inland," beginning nearer to the middle of the card, as in the samples on p. 34.

Underlinings are just as easy on cards as on sheets. They help the arrangement very considerably.

Now, as an exercise in arrangement, take the following ideas collected by Skeiry on the subject of Education

“General outline Definition of Education

“Its influence in determining a man’s place in society, the impossibility of inheriting it like riches, the necessity of labouring to acquire it, as there is no royal road to learning, it is education that makes a learned man superior to one less learned—the want of it compels people to obscurity, instances of self-educated men who have risen to eminence, opportunities, abuses, progress

“*Men who have risen*

“Kitto, Biblical scholar, a bucklayer, made deaf by accident.

“Livingstone taught himself Latin and medicine

“Jonson, a mason in Lincoln’s Inn

“Gifford, a cobbler

“Hugh Miller, a quarryman

“Will Chambers learnt French in a garret

“Cobbett learnt English in din of ballack-room

“T Edwards, a shoemaker.

“B Franklin } self-educated ”

“Samuel Drew }

This is a general subject The ideas were extracted for me, and written in abbreviations I quote them just as they were written You will see that this is the wrong way to collect ideas, at least, each heading should be on its own line

Now take what Skerry says, write down his ideas each on a separate card, add, similarly, your own notions as they occur to you, and afterwards arrange all the notions under the headings of —

Define (and exclude)

Results.

Causes and helps

Hindrances

As a very good exercise, take the following list of

Essay-subjects set in examinations they are ready-arranged under their headings—i.e. under the types to which they belong, write down each subject on a separate card, shuffle these cards, then put each under its proper heading or type. You may find a much better heading or type than the one I suggest. Do not be bound by mine—be free, and make your own.

A Place

e.g. one's school, or native place

A Season, as illustrated by the place

e.g. Spring in London

An Episode of Experience

Personal, national, etc.

A danger, battle, ceremony, election

An amusement or hobby, *e.g.* cricket. You might try to describe it to a foreigner.

Biographies, real or imaginary

Napoleon, the Duke of Marlborough, King

Edward, General Booth

You may include, under biographies, accounts of animals

Or the Essays may be on the character only, not on the man or woman all-round. It may be the character of Kitchener in real life and Hamlet in fiction.

(Jackson, in his "Practical Lessons," gives the following subjects for biographical essays —)

Wellington, Nelson, Napoleon (Rosebery's Life is very good), Blake, Cromwell, Moses, Joshua, David, Paul, Wycliffe, Knox, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Drake, Raleigh, Clive, Warren Hastings, Captain Cook, Livingstone, Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, Scott, Tennyson, Joshua Reynolds, Christopher Wren, Walpole, Chatham,

Pitt, Burke, Peel, Gladstone, Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Longfellow, John Franklin, Isaac Walton, Howard, Florence Nightingale, Jeanne d'Arc, Garibaldi, Galileo

A Class

The Clergy

The Crusades Sometimes the class can equally well be treated as a Period—the Period of the Crusades

A Period You can often treat the period as a sort of person with an individuality of its own (See the Headings for an Essay on a person in Part I)

The Period of Louis XIV

The French Revolution

The Period of Colonisation

An Institution or Custom Hard to separate from other types, such as a Period *eg* Aristocracy may be regarded as a Period in Greek history, and also as an Institution

Aristocracy

Plutocracy

Democracy

Free trade

Hospitality

A State of Affairs may perhaps be classed here

Poverty

War or Peace

The Departments of Life may be classed here too

Business

Education

Oratory

Athletics

Travel

Inventions or discoveries

Steam

The Postage-stamp

The Discovery of America

An abstract quality, etc

Poise

Friendship

Self-reliance

Punctuality

Quickness

Health

Success

A thing

Silver

Alcohol

The cycle

Boots

Proverb or Quotation or Discussion of disputed point

"Penny wise, pound foolish"

"*Vox populi, vox dei*"

(Jackson gives the following list in his "Practical Lessons" They are taken from Civil Service Examination Subjects —)

"Pouvoir c'est vouloir"

"Nothing venture, nothing have"

"Everything comes to the man who knows how to wait"

"To choose time is to save labour"

"Penny wise, pound foolish"

"Familiarity breeds contempt"

"He that gives promptly gives twofold"

"Knowledge is power"

"Second thoughts are best"

"Imitation is the sincerest flattery"

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be"

"Enough is as good as a feast"

"Birds of a feather flock together"

"There is nothing new under the sun"

"The child is father to the man"

"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds makes
ill deeds done"

"Necessity is the mother of invention"

Essays on method

How to choose a profession

How to learn and play a game

How to succeed in examinations

How to become healthy

Results

Geography

Rivers

Mountains

Failure and Success

PART IV DEVISE THE BEGINNING AND PRE- PARE SOME MEANS OF EMPHASIS

YOU have already collected and selected ideas, you have proportioned them, probably by underlining, you have arranged them. Now it is time to work out the beginning, which can be made independent of the general arrangement, afterwards to work out the means by which you will emphasise the important ideas.

In this Part we might take an Essay on an author—
Vergil

When you have collected, selected, proportioned, and arranged your ideas on Vergil, try to work out an interesting beginning.

Work out the beginnings also for all the other Essay-subjects—"What's in a Game?" "England's Geography and England's Greatness," "Poverty," etc.

Do not hurry on to Parts V and VI yet. Do not trouble about anything in Parts I, II, and III. Concentrate your mind on this Part, and first on the beginning of the Essay.

What should you say was the best kind of beginning for an ordinary Essay?

* * * * *

First and foremost, the beginning of your Essay must be interesting to your readers, and not to yourself alone. If you are writing an examination Essay, then probably you must think of the examiner, not only of yourself.

You may find it unadvisable to write as if for a general public—it is the examiner who will read your Essay, and no one else, though, of course, some examiners treat the Essay as if it were intended for a wide public.

One very good beginning will be to show how important the subject is. The Essay on "England's Geography and England's Greatness" you could begin by showing how vital it is that we should understand how much of our greatness is in what we have done and how much in what has been done for us, so that we may not be unduly boastful or unduly timid.

Another beginning is to summarise the general conclusion of the Essay. There are types of Essays in which this paves the way for all that you say afterwards, though, as a rule, you take away some of the interest if your summary is a striking one, everything else might fall rather flat. Interest is to be the keynote of the beginning. The keynote may also be some idea of the scheme of the Essay rather than its general conclusion. An interesting description of the Essay itself may be the very best way to start. As a rule, however, the end is the right place for the summary. There have been essayists who have put the summary both at the beginning and at the end. I should say that such a course was good when you had a number of ideas which you wished to emphasise. If you never summarised them, only a few of them would be remembered, if you summarised them twice, most of them would be remembered. Such a plan is, therefore, appropriate for a serious, instructive, and reforming Essay rather than for a light sketch.

There are few better beginnings than a quotation. The quotation-beginning can be done to death, but it

generally has the effect of making people think Thus, if you started the Essay on "England's Geography and England's Greatness" with a quotation from the well-known song, "It's the Soldiers of the Queen," you would interest most readers who knew the song, and would lead up to the conclusion that the success of England was at least partly due to other causes

The interest is likely to be aroused when the quotation is a paradox—perhaps an exaggerated statement of one side of the question A proverb is for this reason a good beginning You may go on afterwards to point out that the proverb contains a fallacy, in fact, the purpose of your Essay may be to expose this very fallacy, but the striking statement at the beginning has the effect of attracting the reader he reads on, if only because you make him object, you arouse his criticism Afterwards, when he finds that you criticise just as he would, he is in sympathy with you

The question is another kind of opening, not altogether dissimilar Guizot begins his "History of Civilization" with a series of questions somewhat of this nature He asks, What is national prosperity? Is it the wealth of a few? Is it vast extent of possessions? And so forth In each case he is doing somewhat the same as you would do if you began with an obvious fallacy You find a good instance in the answer of Jesus to those who asked him about himself—"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses"

Sometimes the right beginning is a statement which apparently has nothing to do with the subject It is not

the same principle which leads people, when they meet for the first time, to talk about the weather! You begin not with the commonplace, but with the alien subject, not with a view to feeling the way to further subjects of interest, but simply and solely in order to make the reader ask, "Why on earth does he mention this thing? What has it to do with the subject? I must read on and see."

And a humorous beginning is an appropriate one. Such a lecturer as Sir Robert Ball begins and intersperses many of his lectures with excellent anecdotes. These go a long way towards making his serious lectures attractive and not too heavy.

A good method of learning the noble art of beginning well, is to study the beginnings of good books, of essays in Reviews, and of essays in collections of Essays, as in the above-mentioned book by Lobban, in fact, to study beginnings of all kinds, including the beginnings of novels.

As a very marked contrast, take the ordinary novel and compare it with a novel by a master of the art—Daudet. The ordinary novel begins with a description of a house or scenery, at present there is no interest in it. For most readers it is the wrong beginning. True, you have the analogy of the stage, on which you have the stage scenery before you introduce the characters, but the novel is not a stage, and the beginning of a play is not a fair comparison, for some of the characters come on at once, whereas often you have to wade through or skip three or four pages of description of scenery before you are attracted by any human interest! How different where at once you have your character, and perhaps an episode, a conversation, revealing some characteristics,

and possibly alluding to the scenery Then the description of the scenery is not so uninteresting In a word, such a novelist begins with the human and attractive, and attaches the less human and less attractive to the human

Perhaps a still better, though an exaggerated study, is the study of advertisements Take a paper like the *Daily Mail*, and, without necessarily believing the advertisements, study them entirely from this point of view They have not all interesting beginnings Some advertisement-writers do not understand the art of advertising, just as some lecturers do not understand the art of beginning a lecture But in the majority you will find the attractive beginning, though, in the case of the advertisement, very often the middle takes the place of the beginning of an essay It is the part that strikes your eye first You see "Catesby's Cork Lino" advertised What draws your eye to it is not necessarily the beginning, but the picture So with an increasing number of advertisements In a book you look at the beginning first In an Essay you generally do the same, but in an advertisement the most striking feature serves the purpose of a beginning Now study successful advertisements, and find out why they have been interesting

Perhaps it has never occurred to you that the beginning of a book or an Essay is, strictly speaking, the title That is of the highest importance An attractive title will very often get an article accepted without much consideration of the contents of the article Thousands of people are searching for attractive beginnings, titles not only for articles and speeches and headlines for newspapers, but also for goods themselves The desire is to catch the public at the start It is usually a simple

matter, if the article be a good one, to keep the public afterwards. If you ever have dealings with editors or publishers, you will be surprised at the importance they attach to titles—not the titles in the sense of a book or article by Lord Somebody, but titles in the sense of headlines. I have known a publisher reject twenty titles for a single book, at last he hits upon the right one. Mr. E. F. Benson and myself were a long time before we were satisfied with the title of our book on City Games. Again and again we considered and rejected new suggestions, then we hit on “Diversions Day by Day.”

So, with regard to essays (and articles and books, and speeches and lectures as well), I would strongly urge you to choose the most attractive title, if you are allowed to choose the title, but anyhow to choose the most attractive beginning.

Remember the reader, not yourself—to yourself, the description of the scenery may be quite fascinating, you know already the interest attaching to each feature in it, but to the reader the same description may be profoundly dull.

One of the pupils who took my Correspondence-Course in essay-writing, article-writing, and speaking, sent me the following answer to one of the exercises, namely, “How would you begin an Essay on the moral results of Games?” The answer is worth quoting in full. You will see at once that it would attract the general reader and hold his attention through the first page or two, then the Essay itself should keep his attention.

“A siege—the army and inhabitants of a beleaguered city growing thin and gaunt—starvation staring them in the face—

a strong and vigilant enemy around—a friendly army fifty miles away, not knowing the difficulties and how to help their friends. No means of communication left them, all utterly exhausted, unless some one can break through the ranks and do the distance on foot.

“A sporting spirit volunteers. He knows he is taking his life in his hands—but it is the game he has to play.

“The enemy’s bullets do not reach him, and he dodges the search-lights that flash out now and again. He succeeds, and the relieving army returns with him. He has played the game and won. He feels that he has done well for his ‘side,’ and he is just as proud as he used to be when he was on the winning side at school. No, more so—it is the same old feeling intensified.

“Again, in the heat of battle two comrades are fighting side by side. One is victorious, the other is mortally hurt. The victorious man can, if he will, secure his own safety, but there is something in him stronger than love of self. He is a sportsman, and his fellow is in danger. The ‘side’ must come first, the unit after, and he wins a Victoria Cross.

“The *Victoria* is sinking, and her crew, true to the habit of obedience and loyalty learnt first in games and afterwards by the man-o’-war training, stand erect and go down with the ship. Any man of them might desert his side and save himself, but to do so would be unsportsmanlike, the men ‘play the game’ even unto death.

“A man meets reverses and disappointments in business. The work of years is swept away by an unlucky speculation, and his wife and bairns are dependent on him. Temptation says to him that he has failed to take care of them, that they would do better without him, and he wants to blow his brains out and ‘end it all.’ It is the sporting spirit that tells him he must not desert his ‘side,’ that his place is to step back into the highest stage he can reach—begin again patiently and, with more care than ever, climb upward. This game has been lost, but the next may be won!

“A man has entered into a contract that he regrets. He is perplexed and troubled, for it may mean his ruin. He has an unprincipled or incompetent partner, and he must be rid of him. How? It is the test of a sportsman, what methods he uses—but always there is in his mind a sense of responsibility, and he finds a way to protect the community, himself, and his dependents from unscrupulousness. He is a sportsman, and a sportsman takes

care not to encourage unfair play. It is treason to the game, but in preventing the treason from operating the sportsman never forgets that the traitor *has* been a friend.

"Then would come some account of the danger of relying on play alone, without making sure it is the right kind of play.

"A young man belongs to a struggling family. It is difficult for his father to give him a sufficient allowance while he is being prepared for a profession. He joins an expensive club for games, and is drawn into society which is beyond his income, leads him into debt, and so adds to his father's burdens. This is not sportsmanlike. It arises from a misconception of play.

"A girl or a wife neglects her home duties in order that she may shine in games. She has failed to understand the sporting spirit and to carry it into her daily life. She becomes selfish and hard, but it is not because of the play, it is because she does *not* play the real game.

"Then could follow the theory in more abstract form."

Work out good beginnings for the various Essay-subjects suggested in this book.

Do not hurry on to the arrangement of ideas yet. Study beginnings, and give yourself plenty of practice. For that "the beginning is half of the whole" is not so wildly absurd a theory as it sounds. In American newspapers the Headline is more than half of the whole matter which attracts the average reader's notice.

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Having begun your essay, and having, let us hope, secured the readers' interest and attention, you now prepare your ideas so that you lay stress on the important points. How can you lay stress on a point?

Partly by the way in which you describe it. You can spend some time in describing it. You can—in a speech, at any rate—say the words with more force, and perhaps more slowly, and so forth. But, apart from the language, or, at least, to some extent apart from the language, how can you make an important idea look important and

emphatic? How can you impress it upon the reader?
Work that out first Collect ideas

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Now study the passage from Matthew, quoted above,
and see how the fundamental idea is emphasised there

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First of all, there is the position of the idea Let it
come near the beginning, near the end, or perhaps in the
very middle, provided that unimportant ideas, a sort of
padding, come on both sides of the middle It is usually
the first and last things that you remember best, and the
things which come after or before a rest or pause It is
so with foods as well as with ideas

Sheer bulk will go a long way When you find a
whole page devoted to a thing, it is apt to impress you
more than when you have only a line or two Bulk tells
everywhere The more ignorant the public, probably
the more influential the bulk, on the same principle that
many people want not a good magazine, but a large
magazine, not a good plateful of food (though that is
what they call it), but a large plateful of food

Much of the bulk can be produced by repetition
As you see in the instance from Matthew, there may be
sheer repetition of almost or quite the same words, or
else a paraphrase of these words The art of paraphrasing
is one to be very carefully considered A good
practice for it is to try to write poetry, for, when you
must make lines scan and rhyme, you are obliged to
have a larger vocabulary, greater control of language,
than when you think yourself more or less independent
of metre and sound

Very few use the question sufficiently to emphasise
ideas They plunk their new ideas down suddenly upon

an unsteady soil Just as you have to prepare the soil for the sowing of the seed, so you have to prepare the mind for the sowing of the ideas, and you can prepare the mind, to some extent, by asking the question You make the person think, as when Jesus asked, "What went ye out for to see?" Instead of beginning by telling the people it was a "prophet" they went out to see, the idea was emphasised by the questions asked and then answered

One reason for this is that by such means you take up time, you give almost the same effect as by bulk of words Moreover, you secure the attention, the person is kept waiting and expectant, as for the last note of a tune

Somewhat similar in principle is the use of the pronoun "He made a mistake in hurrying so much," is an emphatic statement You can give it emphasis in the following way, you can say, "He made a mistake in this he hurried too much" Such, indeed, is the origin of the phrase which has now lost nearly all emphasis, *e.g.* "He made a mistake in that he hurried too much" The words "this" and "that" at first pointed forward, like a kind of sign-post, to what came after Or a pronoun may sometimes not anticipate and be the trumpeting herald of the idea, but follow after and gather up the idea "He hurried too much in this he made a mistake," or "in that he made a mistake" It is most interesting to study the history of words, and to see how they lose their emphasis in course of time "He said that it was so" at first meant, "He said the following thing—namely, it was so" Probably it was confined to an emphatic statement at first, and especially where there was a contrast, as in, "I said this—'It was right,'

he said that—‘It was wrong’” Now, “that” has here lost this sense almost, if not quite, altogether. Our word “the” had this sense too, as is easily seen from the history of similar words in Sanskrit, Greek, and (vulgar) Latin. In early times it often pointed forward to a person about to be mentioned, especially by way of contrast. “Mortals *ei*r, but God is wise.” This could be expressed more emphatically as “Mortals *err*, but he, the other, namely God, is wise,” which we might paraphrase thus. “Mortals *ei*r, but, on the other hand, God is wise,” or, using italics, “but *God* is wise.” In fact, I think that the nearest approach which we have to italics in stylish English is this use of the pronoun, anticipating or alluding to the person, thing, or act to be emphasised, as in a sentence like this, “But when he, the Spirit of Truth, has come, he shall guide you.”

The comparison is an invaluable means of emphasis, as of force and clearness. The New Testament is full of comparisons. “What comparison shall we use?” Jesus asked himself, when he wished to make a thing clear and forcible. Now, comparisons may be of several kinds.

First, there is the word which scarcely has any trace of its origin left, its vividness has disappeared, its colours have faded. You can think of hundreds of instances of this. It has been said that language is a storehouse of faded metaphors, which means that the words have become stereotyped. When we use the word “manufacture” in reference to things not made by hand, we are using a word which was once a vivid picture. It has lost that vividness, it now often means simply “make.” “Concoct” has lost much of its sense of mixing elements to form a dish. Sometimes, however,

the comparison still remains. The pictorial words still bring before you a picture or sense-impression. It is by these comparisons especially, these mental pictures, that we can emphasise important ideas.

Comparisons are of two other kinds. Suppose you wish to emphasise the causes of England's greatness, you can compare the causes of England's greatness with the causes of any other nation's greatness. You are comparing together things of the same class. Or, on the other hand, you can compare the causes of England's greatness with the causes of an individual's greatness, the causes of a tree's greatness—firm and solid and slowly made foundations, and so forth. Here you are comparing things of different classes. Sometimes the one kind of comparison is more effective, sometimes the other.

Pictorial words—or, at least, words that still have a savour of sense-impression in them, words that appeal to the eye, ear, muscular sense, and so on, comparisons with things of the same class, comparisons with things of a different class—as of colonies with branches of a tree, these help emphasis, and serve other purposes as well.

What other purposes? Work out what are the chief values of comparisons.

* * * * *

Language is to a great extent based on them. It is based on sense-realities. You speak of a fiery orator. You mean, perhaps, a man who speaks with enthusiasm. You go back eventually to a sense-impression, fire being the thing which burns, destroys, shines brightly, and so forth, possibly the thing which roars! In so far as you carry people back to the simple and primitive sense-impressions, you are likely to appeal to them, more than

if you confined yourself to abstract phraseology, as I do in this sentence See things vividly in your mind Hear, touch, taste, smell, and move Fill your language with sense-impressions, and it is likely to attract and to convince The comparison, then, is usually an interesting thing, appealing to fundamental memories, memories on which all language and memory are based, memories without which language eventually means nothing

Therefore comparisons of the right kind are likely to help the clearness and good expression, they are likely to help your readers to realise what you mean, and to keep awake till they realise it

By this means, and by the fact that they are interesting and take up room, they serve as a help towards emphasis

It follows, then, that a comparison has its danger as well as its advantages The danger is that you should use a comparison when there is an idea which you do not wish to emphasise I know one writer whose language is always pictorial With the most trivial notions, she cannot use commonplace language The result is that, when she has an idea which she desires really to impress with extra weight upon her readers, she has exhausted all her reserves, she has nothing further with which to emphasise it except underlinings and repetitions

Repetitions by themselves are apt to be monotonous By means of a comparison you can repeat without seeming to repeat

Then, again, a comparison may suggest to you quite a new idea Here is an instance You have an essay on Colonies As a comparison, you have (see above) the branches of a plant There are certain plants of which the cuttings will take root and flourish

independently There are certain trees of which the cuttings perish when separated from the mother tree Work out this theme You will find that it is most suggestive Whatever your Essay-subject, always spend some time in following out comparisons

As an exercise, take the ideas you have collected on the various subjects suggested in this book, then consider by what comparisons you could best emphasise the ideas which seem to you most important

Study the passage from Matthew (vii, 15-27) again and again. Notice how the comparisons were taken from the daily life, occupations, interests of the particular hearers When you are finding comparisons, have in view first a general public, then a special class—now working-men, now society-women, now schoolboys, now a room-full of clergymen

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Contrasts are invaluable too Here, again, you may contrast things of the same class, or things of different classes

In emphasising the causes of England's greatness, you can contrast the causes of England's failure, or you can contrast the causes of Rome's greatness, or of the greatness of any other nation, or, on the other hand, the causes of the greatness (or the failure) of a person, or of the greatness or strength of a tree Here you are contrasting something of a different class

What are the chief values of contrasts?

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Contrasts, like comparisons, may help people to realise your ideas You may speak for hours about "style" without making your readers understand what you mean, so long as you describe merits of style—grace

versatility, and so forth. But put before them the faults of style—ugliness, monotony, stiffness, at once they see what you mean. They realise—or come nearer to realising—what style *is*, by starting with what it is *not*.

And, like comparisons, contrasts may bring out new aspects. You take a vague word like “good” or “nice.” It remains a vague word till you have the contrasts. Contrasts with such ideas as “selfish,” “grumpy,” and so forth, may not only help you to realise the meanings of “good” and “nice” they may suggest fresh ideas, which would not have occurred to you otherwise. An idea is usually the opposite of at least one idea. By working out many contrasts you see the thing all round.

Contrasts, like comparisons, repeat without apparent repetition. They give clearness, emphasis, and variety. They are a valuable help to the essayist.

As an exercise, work out contrasts to emphasise any twelve important ideas already collected. *eg* the Senate as a cause of Rome’s early success. And see the other Essay-subjects.

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A special department of contrast is the refutation of the fallacy. Most people are slaves of fallacies: they accept, ready-made, the fashions and customs of the ignorant classes. Now, if you state the fallacy—say, that practice makes perfect, that big muscles are a proof of health, that old men are wiser than young men, that we all eat too much, that what is one man’s meat must be any other man’s poison—you appeal, at least, to the known and familiar. By refuting the fallacy, you are really repeating and emphasising your own statement.

Then you can give emphasis by instances. That word “good,” once again, is vague. Perhaps even after

you have suggested contrasts with "selfish," "grumpy," etc., it may be vague. But give concrete instances and pictures of goodness, like the concrete instances and pictures of games in the beginning of the Essay on p. 82, and you have succeeded in giving emphasis. All general statements that are worth anything must be based on actual instances, and actual instances will often help you to general principles which you would not guess for yourself. They will help you to make general principles emphatic, otherwise your abstract expression would escape the reader's notice, as cold water glides off a duck's back or a greasy face.

As a very easy exercise, work out examples to illustrate the words "good," "honour," "evolution," "physical culture."

* * * * *

So far, it has been impossible to keep the means of emphasis altogether distinct from expression. You will object, perhaps, and say that this—the practice of emphasising ideas—all belongs to expression, not to the preparation of the Essay before you begin to express it. But I maintain that, with most people, if they do not collect their means of emphasis first, and make a scheme, as it were, they will not collect them at all. Think for a moment, and you will see how separate (or separable) the two processes are. You are going to emphasise the fact that Vergil was a poet of a new kind. Whereas Homer's Achilles or Odysseus was Achilles or Odysseus, perhaps an imaginary man, any moral lesson being comparatively unimportant compared with the interest in the man himself and his adventures and character, Vergil's Æneas was not only an imaginary man, but also a real individual (for he represented the

Emperor Augustus), and also a People (for he represented and personified the whole of the Roman People) In other words, he was a comparison as well as an actuality Now, you wish to emphasise this How will you do it? Partly by instances and comparisons and contrasts You give, as an instance of Æneas' respect for and loyalty to his father (*pietas*), his rescue of Anchises from the siege of Troy, you compare Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," another allegory, you contrast Homer, a plain, "heroic," narrative Now, all this clearly belongs not yet to expression, but to the collection of ideas still It is one question, What instance shall you cite? What writer shall you compare or contrast? It is quite another question, How will you describe the instance in language? How will you word the comparison and contrast?

So that this subject of emphasis belongs, far more really than you would imagine, to the preparation of an Essay before you come to write it down

I have put in these two paragraphs chiefly for the sake of emphasis itself I did not wish to pile on my suggestions one on the top of another I wished to relieve your attention a little Now I come back to other means of emphasis besides the above mentioned namely, besides the position, the bulk, the repetition, the question, the pronoun, the comparison, the contrast, and the instance

Closely akin to the three last means is the start with what is admitted and familiar as a basis—I mean, what is admitted by the readers and familiar to them

For example, a writer wishes to emphasise his belief that we have lived many lives in this world, that this is not the first time we have lived in the world as human beings, and will not be the last time either He knows that most readers will be averse to the theory He

knows that people do not seem to remember any past lives on earth, when they bore some different name. So he starts with what is admitted and familiar. He says, "When you are seeing a place apparently for the first time, when you are hearing a conversation for the first time, has it never flashed through your mind, This is not new at all—it is a mere repetition?" The reader probably has had that experience. The starting-point prepares for and therefore helps to impress the new idea.

Then he lays foundations firm and solid—foundations of understanding, foundations of sympathy, and he goes a long way towards clearness.

Clearness is an excellent means of emphasis. There is a certain clearness which is the reverse. When a statement is so clear that it gives the reader the effect of being commonplace, then it ceases to be emphatic. "Goodness means happiness." This may be perfectly clear, yet thoroughly unemphatic, because it is trite.

In fact, sometimes obscurity is the best means of emphasis. Such writers as Thucydides, Tacitus, Juvenal, Carlyle, Browning, have achieved a great deal through obscurity. In the first place, people find their curiosity piqued as by any puzzle—they *will* understand what the man is driving at, it appeals to their pugnacity, their desire for mastery. And, while they are working out the solution, they are spending time over the idea. So the writer knowingly or unknowingly achieves his object. By bulky writing, by repetition, he might weary the readers. Now and then, by putting his readers on their mettle, he interests them and compels them to solve the problem, and to give time to the digestion of the thought. It is perhaps somewhat as the hard crust may be more digestible, more valuable to the system, if properly eaten,

than the soft crumb. If it is eaten at all, it is likely to be eaten carefully and with plenty of mastication and saliva.

On both sides of the idea to be emphasised, set mere words—trivialities or padding. Padding is abused mercilessly. For certain classes of people it has great value, as, for certain classes of people, fibre has great value in food. If you cannot make the idea stand out distinctly enough, then make the background exceedingly obscure. Padding is like the wait between the courses at a meal—an excellent plan for those who gobble.

How can you ensure that any words shall be padding—how can you avoid emphasis? How can you throw an idea into the obscure background? In a picture it may be easy enough: you blur the thing. In style this is not so easy. It is not so easy to let a phrase escape notice when you want it to escape notice. Politicians and public speakers have found this to their cost.

Besides the simple plan of omitting the idea which is unimportant, practise the opposite arts to the above. For instance, instead of repeating the idea, say it once only. Work out and write down what are the opposites of the means of emphasis.

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First, you have the position. There are plenty of uninteresting positions where ideas may be safely buried. They would be the times in a speech, probably on both sides of the middle and somewhere before the end, when the audience is wearied. The beginning is a position of emphasis, so is the ending.

Then there is small bulk, little time spent in describing the idea, the barest possible description of the idea, and only one description.

Then there is plainness of language, no question, no anticipatory pronoun, no comparison, no contrast, and perhaps, if possible, an abstract phrase, such as often makes a sermon so dull. There must be no refutation of the fallacy you must do nothing to call attention to the idea.

There must be no piercing clearness, yet there must be sufficient clearness to prevent the reader from puzzling, and so spending time and thought on the idea. You must escape notice with your expression, an easy enough thing to do when you do not intend it, but hard when you do intend it. Somewhat similarly, the schoolboy who has thrown something in lesson-time finds it hard to look innocent—he looks too much up at the ceiling.

As exercises in emphasis, consider how you would give prominence to the importance of such Headings as these, in the Essay on "The Causes of Rome's Greatness"—Family-organisation, and the system of Colonies, or how you would give prominence to the effect of varied climate and scenery in making England a great country.

In fact, go through all your collected ideas, and take those which have three lines under them, and work out the different ways in which you could emphasise them.

PART V EXPRESS THE IDEAS

YOU have now collected and selected your ideas, you have proportioned them, arranged them, worked out the beginning of the Essay and most of the means of emphasis, such as any elaborate comparison or contrast. Now express these ideas.

Before you express them, it might be as well to write them down from the cards on to a sheet. Then you will have the whole scheme before you, and need not distract your attention by fingering the cards. Besides this, the mere writing out of the ideas would give you a *résumé* of the whole scheme, perhaps even better than if you read through the scheme once or twice.

It is possible also that here one or two new thoughts may suggest themselves to you before you begin the expression. If so, put them down.

Now as to the question of dictation *versus* writing.

First of all, a word as to the technique or mechanism of writing. If you are writing with a pen, get a good pen. Personally, I use one of the cheapest kinds of stylographic pen. It takes me a long while to choose one, and probably about only one out of every five which I have used for a short time continues satisfactory. Yet I consider that the money is not wasted, because with a stylographic pen I can write comfortably and for a long while without dipping in the ink or renewing the supply.

If, however, I am writing something which I shall copy out or have typewritten afterwards, then I often use pencil, because it is quicker. I do not want to be delayed at all when I write, I want to be able to write as fast as possible.

Therefore I have not only a good pen or pencil, but also smooth paper. My friends call me extravagant, but I think I get my money's worth out of the smoothness.

Then, again, I like ample spacing. If I write the words close together, I may save a fraction of a faithing now and then in paper, but I make correction much harder, and sometimes I make it impossible, so that I have to rewrite the whole page.

For the same reason, and because it looks nicer and helps the reader, I leave a margin along all four sides of the paper.

Eventually, if I do not get my manuscript typewritten, I write it clearly. That is only eventually. While I am expressing the ideas for the first time, one of my objects is to get into a swing.

What should you think were the advantages of dictating to a typist over writing with a pen or pencil?

Dictation is good practice for speaking. It encourages you to choose words quickly, and to speak them in the presence of some one else. It is easy enough to speak conversationally, but to speak seriously, as in a debate, is not easy to an average Englishman.

Dictation, then, helps you to overcome shyness, if you have any. In a useful way it gets you over the first stages of nervousness.

Besides, you gain a better idea of the effect of what you are writing. When you come to think of it, many

people, if not most, when they read a book, read it "aloud to themselves," they, as it were, hear themselves speaking. Therefore, when you are speaking to them, you get a better idea of your effect on them, though there are some, apparently, who read rather by sight than by speaking the words inaudibly.

Needless to say, besides the practice for speaking and the better test of how your writing will affect the average reader, there is far greater speed. It is not easy to write more than fifteen hundred words an hour. Exactly how many words it is easy to dictate in an hour depends largely on the matter and the typist, but double that number, or perhaps even more, is not excessive. My present rate is about four thousand words an hour, generally rather less, for dictation. It would be impossible for me to write at anything like that speed.

Then, when the typewritten manuscript comes to me, it is easier to correct, it is almost as easy as to correct a printed proof.

And, besides, just as to dictate your article gives you an idea of its effect on the reader who reads it aloud to himself, so to typewrite your article, or to have it typewritten, gives you a better idea of its effect on the eye of the reader; for typewriting is nearer to the final printing than writing is.

But much depends upon the typist.

The question of typewriting *versus* writing is a different one. First comes the mechanical work, the finger-work—as in piano-playing—to be made nearly automatic. There is no doubt about the advantages of typewriting over writing as regards speed. But there are cases where the click of the instrument does not cease to be a nuisance and a distraction of the thought. From

brain to pen and paper is an automatic process almost free from sound, from brain to typewriter and paper may be a nuisance

Now for the advantages of writing over dictation to a typist

Writing is available in more places than typewriting is. You cannot easily carry a typewriter about with you everywhere, it is a cumbersome thing. Still less can you carry a typist.

Writing is obviously cheaper as well, so far as regards money. It may not be cheaper so far as regards time and energy. A millionaire would find it much too expensive. His time and energy are worth more than the expense of the typewriter and the typist to whom he dictates.

Writing may bring with it more leisureliness and comfort. There is none of the shyness of dictation. I have quoted elsewhere the experiences of a leading physician who was advised by a friend of his to engage a shorthand clerk and typist for correspondence. The physician dictated his letters the first evening. The second evening he told the clerk that there was no correspondence. The third evening he could not stand the presence of the clerk at all, and threatened him with death if he did not leave the room at once!

The advantages of typewriting over writing are obvious, without further discussion. The typewriting is eventually a quicker process and a more legible process.

Whether you use writing or typewriting, the following general hints may be worth considering.

Besides the wide spacing, so as to leave room for

collections, it is a good plan to put separate paragraphs on separate pages, unless you are writing the Essay in its final form. Why is this so? Because, like the card-system, it involves less rewriting, less scissors and paste, less need of destroying a whole page because some part of the matter on it is to be corrected.

At first, pay no regard to the final expression. Why? Because you must not stop your swing. I may repeat here the experience of Mr. E. F. Benson, the novelist, when he was doing a book with me. We both collected the ideas, and then he wrote the manuscript of one chapter at full speed. The manuscript came to me with a certain number of grammatical faults in it (these he would afterwards have corrected), but with a sense of freshness and keenness which might have been marred if he had stopped to correct the grammar during the writing. As it was, he sacrificed the grammar just for the present for the sake of the swing. The result of it was that his chapters carried the reader along with them. It was perfectly easy to remove the little blemishes afterwards, it would have been dangerous to try to remove them during the process of writing.

In order to get a good swing, it may be well to read a good novel (or other book) first. Many of those who write fine Latin verses have told me that they are much benefited by studying Vergil or some other writer, and growing familiar with his rhythm and his peculiarities. This must not be to encourage slavish imitation, but just to increase the ease. How often one finds that one does a thing more satisfactorily and more easily after half an hour's work than at the start. By reading a model, you start at nearly full pace. I find in games that it takes me some minutes before I am doing myself justice. By

studying the model, one has, as it were, this few minutes' practice—this "knock up"—before the game begins

Now for the expression What are the essentials of good expression or style?

It is important to notice that we are here considering not the ideas themselves at all I have seen some people classify under style "genuine belief in the ideas"! There is a good idea It may or may not be genuinely believed by you That is one matter Whether you express that idea well or not is almost altogether another matter The question of genuineness has been considered under the heading of selection of ideas If you have worked out the advice in this book conscientiously, you have nothing to think of in this chapter except expression, and you have not to think of the details even of that you have merely to express the ideas in reasonably good language, relying on your revision, which will be considered in Part VI

Clearness is, I think, the first essential of expression. There are certain exceptions Some of the greatest writers have written some of their greatest thoughts in obscure language, perhaps as paradoxes The words of Jesus in the New Testament are not always piercingly clear, it sometimes served his purpose best to make his hearers think for themselves Striking instances are to be found among what are called the unwritten sayings of Jesus, especially the following —

"He that has wondered shall become supreme, he that has become supreme shall rest"

"Lift up the stone, and there you will find me, cut the wood, and I am there"

Now, how are you to get clearness in your style?

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First, there is the use of the concrete. If you ask yourself, "Who does what?" or "What does what?" you are likely to have series of pictures, or, at any rate, sense-impressions. *Procrastination is the thief of time*. That is abstract. "Who does what?" Any man who puts off what he should do, wastes time. The proverb does not call up a picture. Perhaps this paraphrase does not. Very well, then, go further back and take an instance. Jones ought to start for his city-train at a quarter-past eight. He starts at seventeen minutes past eight, misses his train, and has to wait a quarter of an hour for the next one. There is a picture of some one doing (or not doing) something.

Before you go any further in this chapter, work out the following exercises, turning abstract ideas into pictures or sense-impressions—some one or something must be doing something. Err rather on the side of excessive definiteness.

That will be the first exercise. *Err on the side of excessive definiteness*. Put this as a picture, if you can. Think of an instance. Instead of saying, "Wisdom is happiness," think of an instance, "Wise men are happy," or, more definitely and more narrowly still, "Socrates was happy because he was wise." Picture Socrates, and how he would show his happiness or contentment, and how he would show his wisdom. Socrates was able to live on very little. He was wise in adapting himself to his conditions. He did not lose his temper, he did not grumble, he looked calm, ugly though he was.

"Err on the side of excessive definiteness" might be personalised and pictorialised in many ways. Here is a process by which one can get at its meaning.

Choose an example You want to give some one an idea as to the importance of exercise He should choose just the right exercise for his own particular needs But in order to make your meaning clear, you tell him of some one exercise You lift your arms up above your head, and prove to him that this has a certain effect You are too definite, but this is probably better than failing to attract his attention at all

These exercises are nearly useless if you do not try to express them in your own way, freely, before you look at my suggestion

"Is marriage a failure?"

When two people marry, are they, owing to their marriage, better off than they would be if they were unmarried? To err on the side of excessive definiteness, ask whether the married people are happier (this is too definite, because failure and success are not entirely a matter of happiness They include this, and also character, health and appearance, brain-work, economy, and so forth But the definiteness helps as a starting-point)

"The iniquity of the condemnation of Socrates is universally felt"

Every one feels that the judges condemned Socrates very unjustly

"The memory of Pitt has been assailed times innumerable, often justly, often unjustly."

Very many people have blamed Pitt, after his death, some have blamed him justly, some unjustly

"He fondly aimed at reconciling contradictions"

In the particular passage from which this is taken, a governor wanted to find an officer who would (a) win victories, and then (b) hand over to him, the governor, the credit of these victories. The governor wanted a man both (a) skilled in war, and (b) unambitious of personal renown. He found no such man, for (a) the skilled in war were not unambitious of personal renown, while (b) the unambitious of personal renown were not skilled in war. He tried in vain to find one man endowed with two different characteristics which were not likely to exist in one man.

"Insensible to pity, fearless of consequences, he was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful prince might at once suggest and disclaim"

Without pity, and without fear as to what would happen as the result of his acts, he readily carried out every cruel deed which the prince, a man of great cleverness, first of all [picture the scene, and realise him as doing something] had hinted at, then, when it had been carried out, he denied that he had hinted at it.

"During one of those exceptional conjunctures which confound all ordinary political distinctions, his name was the rallying cry of a class of people to whom, on almost all great questions of principle, he was diametrically opposed"

Here take a definite instance. Liberals and Conservatives are assumed to be opposed on almost all great questions of principle. But there comes up the question of Home Rule for Ireland, then a Liberal

joins the Conservatives for the time, as a Liberal Unionist. So this might be a paraphrase—At a time when it happened—as it does happen very rarely—that the parties in the State are in some respects not altogether distinct, certain people followed him, as their leader, from whom he differed entirely on nearly every important political question.

"Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom"

Not a few of those who in public matters generously concede some of their strict rights act wisely.

This personalising paraphrase does not mean that finally all your expression is to be pictorial. But until you have come to a clear and typical picture or sense-impression, until you have gone back to that, you cannot be sure that you understand what you are saying. Go back to the picture or sense-impression, then, if you find the abstract expression better, use it, provided it is distinct.

Other means of clearness are those which I have already mentioned as means of emphasis—namely, comparisons, and contrasts, and the refutation of fallacies. We need not repeat the merits of these means here.

Questions, also, will help you to arrive at definitions and to refute objections and to expose fallacies. Such questions as, "What went ye out for to see?" have their value as means of clearness. They tend, for instance, to knock down a number of posts, leaving the one important post standing. At first a certain idea or set of words brings to your mind a number of pictures, any one of

which may be the right one By means of the question and answer, you cancel and blot out the wrong pictures, and leave only the right one

Another help is the use of Anglo-Saxon words, instead of Greek, or Latin and French words, especially those in *-ation*. These latter words have their value in philosophic writing, and the supreme merit of Anglo-Saxon words has often been exaggerated by cranks But the Anglo-Saxon words are the best for certain purposes *Procrastination is the thief of time* The word *procrastination* here sums up a large number of examples, sums up the pith of them, in an excellent manner But, if you wish to have straightforward instances of procrastination, you may find Anglo-Saxon words almost indispensable

As further exercises in the art of clearness (I mean especially clearness with the general reader in view, and not the learned specialist), take any obscure and abstract passage and turn it into pictorial English It is one of the merits of Latin Prose Composition, properly taught, that it compels people to consider, "Who does what?" No longer can they talk with their surfaces, as it were, "gassing," as politicians and preachers and reformers so often do they must come to hard or kind facts If the speakers themselves are not practical, at least their language must be practical when they ask themselves, "Who does what?" But, as a rule, Latin Prose Composition is not taught in this way It is taught without any special lesson At Cambridge I used to get my pupils to take a piece of typical English Prose—perhaps by Macaulay or Gibbon, or a still more philosophical writer—and turn it into concrete English before they attempted to turn that concrete English into Latin.

I should strongly recommend Postgate's "Sermo Latinus" (Macmillan and Co) as containing well-selected materials for such a treatment. Some of the above sentences were selected from that book.

Here is an exceptionally hard passage to paraphrase in clear (mostly personal) English. It is taken from Huxley.

"Objective and subjective things he thus ascertains to be alike inscrutable in their substance and genesis. In all directions his investigations eventually bring him face to face with an insoluble enigma; he learns at once the greatness and the littleness of the human intellect, its power in dealing with all that comes within the range of experience, its impotence in dealing with all that transcends experience. He realises with a special vividness the utter incomprehensibility of the simplest fact considered in itself. He, more than any other, truly knows that *in its ultimate essence* nothing can be known."

"As to his feelings and imaginations, and whatever he has in his mind, he thus learns that he cannot know exactly what they are, or how they have become what they are; neither can he know this as to trees and animals, and whatever exists outside his mind. Let him examine everything in every way, and he finds what he cannot understand and know. He learns that he has a mind, on the one hand, great, because it can understand what it has itself experienced, on the other hand, puny, because it cannot understand what it has not itself experienced. especially puny, because it cannot understand even the very smallest fact when it considers the fact all alone, without reference to other facts. [Consider here an example. A match lights when rubbed against a rough surface. Why? Because of certain changes. Why should these changes have just this result? Precisely

what happens? We cannot give the *full* explanation] This man, who has investigated thoroughly, knows truly that nothing can be known altogether, throughout and in respect to its source and real nature”

Then, in your letter-writing, be scrupulously clear Letter-writing could be made excellent practice in composition, but most people do not regard it as a field for exercise, and rather transfer to all their compositions some of the carelessness which appears in their letters As a matter of fact, a letter deserves as much care as an article or essay For in a letter a person is more likely to be genuine In an essay, too often, he is talking to the gallery or to the examiner, not saying what he means

A help to clearness may be **brevity** But brevity sometimes means obscurity Brevity is a useful quality in style, but it is not essential Think where it is a mistake

Besides obscure brevity, such as Browning sometimes shows, there is a brevity where padding would be preferable You have an important idea, you express it briefly You ought to give the reader a chance of sipping it, as if it were a rare drink, but you do not encourage him to spend time over it he gobbles it down, and misses nine-tenths of the taste and essence and good effect Whereas, had you given him the drink in little sips, he would have realised the taste and effects far better

This is not a plea for unnecessary words, but a plea against brevity as an absolute merit in style Brevity is no such thing Now and then it is the supreme merit, on other occasions it is a serious fault A better description than brevity would be true **economy** Brevity includes

briefness of expression of all kinds, true economy does not. Brevity corresponds to the faults of economy of the person who will not spend threepence in order to save or earn a shilling—the narrow economy of the old school, of the person whose time is worth five pounds an hour, and who spends half an hour in untying strings and saving a penny. You must not hesitate to spend words, to lavish words, when to spend and lavish words will give the required result.

Then, again, to be brief may be to be uninteresting. There are so-called practical business-men who in their life have no place for flowers. "Of what use flowers? They cost money, you do not sell them again, you do not make money out of them, they are not business-like." No, thank heaven, they are not, but they are interesting, and they may be worth their money if they produce the desired state of mind. Now brevity may be a grand mistake if it is brevity at the sacrifice of interest, where flowers of language would achieve the required result. There was a time in Roman oratory when the speakers began to use flowers of language. To the stern Cato flowers were an extravagance, if, indeed, he ever thought of using them at all. With the rhetoricians of decadent times flowers abounded everywhere. In the best oratory of Cicero we find just enough flowers. The ruthless business-man might go through Cicero and cut these out, but he might as well do this to an old English garden, leaving the "practical" gravel walks.

Interest is, I think, as important a feature of style, and as much neglected a feature, as clearness and true economy. You can get interest partly by clearness and partly by economy. A ten-page description in a novel may be clear, but it may fail to interest because it is too much of a good thing, it is extravagant.

Interest you can also secure by comparisons with things familiar to the reader—and by contrasts with such things. And, indeed, you can generally secure interest by keeping the reader perpetually in view—in fact, by speaking to the room, or to the paper, as if you were speaking to your actual readers or to your most typical reader. It is said that Carlyle used to read his writings to his old servant for her criticism. One would not always guess this from the results, unless she fell asleep and failed to criticise. And the domestic servant is not the final court of appeal for an ordinary essay. At the same time, what is clear to the domestic servant, and what is interesting to her, will probably be quite clear and fairly interesting to others as well.

As an example of interesting style, take the above quoted passage from Matthew. If you consider the New Testament generally, you will find that part of the interest is due to the clearness of the comparisons, the contrasts, and the obvious sympathy with the daily life of the readers.

Now, most readers to-day live in cities. The interest of country-dwellers is not the interest of city-dwellers. For city-dwellers, though some country phrases have their interest and attraction—there will never be a time when the seed and the flower and the fruit are uninteresting, when the sea, the river, the lake, the mountain, and the valley are devoid of attraction—yet there often is need to express ideas in terms of city things—to take our language, without bad grammar, no longer from the fields alone, but from the streets with their houses, lighting, traffic, and so forth. Try to describe in city terms, as to a person who best understands a city business, the working and economy of the human body and mind.

The interest of your style is no absolute thing either. Just a few phrases are of universal interest to mankind. They are the exception. As a rule, interest depends on appropriateness to the subject, and especially to the particular readers.

Appropriateness is, then, the principle which we must add to clearness, true economy, and interest. I was reading the other day a book which put down, as essential elements in style, sarcasm and dignity. There are innumerable writings and speeches in which sarcasm would be the greatest mistake—sheer cruelty. The sarcastic schoolmaster is seldom a success from any point of view. Dignity, again, is sometimes a miserable failure. There are times when absolute equality with the reader, or a confession of inferiority, is essential. Appropriateness, however, will include sarcasm where sarcasm is good, dignity where dignity is good, brevity where it is good, diffuseness and flowers where they are good.

Appropriateness is a law applying alike to the selection of ideas, to the arrangement of ideas, etc., to the length of the paragraphs, the length and structure of the sentences, and the choice of the words. Your ideas and your expression must be appropriate to your readers, within the limits of good taste.

We can, without much stretching of terms, class, under the general heading of appropriateness, clearness (which is nearly always appropriate to style), true economy, and interest, for how can unintelligible, unnecessarily diffuse, and uninteresting writing be appropriate anywhere?

So also **variety**. If all books were the same size—all books, all essays, all articles, all speeches, if each

class had a uniform length; nay, more, if each were composed of paragraphs of a uniform length, and each paragraph of sentences of a uniform length, and each sentence of words of a uniform length,—we could not call the result “style” for the few appropriate sentences there would be ever so many inappropriate sentences

Then, again, suppose the person only had one set of comparisons, or used no comparisons at all, but only used homogeneous contrasts, suppose a person was always pictorial in his language and never abstract, or always abstract and never pictorial, we should naturally complain

Variety is, perhaps, needed far more in style than in food. There may be a few people who would thrive on similar food day after day, but it seems that most people, as they are constituted, are better on a varied diet. So with style. It may be that some day one style will prevail, it may be that to-day one style is best for just a few people here and there; but for most of us variety is practically indispensable

You might think that the sounds should never be harsh; yet that is not a universal law. When you are describing an explosion or a series of harsh noises, the appropriate words will give a harsh sound. Here, also, the law of appropriateness is pre-eminent. In general writing you should avoid harsh sounds. There is no need to quote examples, you will find them everywhere. Only one particular type need be noted here, and that is where you repeat the same word in different senses. “He made a point of not making any mistakes in the photographs which he took and published.” Here we have the word “make” and part of the word “take” repeated. These repetitions jar upon the critical ear of the more refined reader,

A certain amount of repetition or similarity of sounds is good. An excellent example is quoted by Prof. Barrett Wendell: "Quietly rested beneath the drums and trappings of three conquests."

It would be hard to equal this in its effect on the ear, because the alliteration is craftily concealed. Alliteration goes a long way, and the less one is aware of the fact of alliteration the more one admires the sound of the words. In advertisements it is almost essential. Read through a page of advertisements, from the "Little Live! Pills" or the "Pink Pills" up to the highest educational advertisements, if they are planned by a skilful writer, and you will find alliteration, and you will find that this alliteration is effective. Rhyme itself is a kind of alliteration—an alliteration or similarity in the rhythm and in the sound of the endings of the lines.

A rule almost on a par with appropriateness is **safety**. Again and again you doubt whether something is right or wrong. In that case avoid it. Now and then you may make a bold and brave leap which lands you in success, but that is the exception. Keep on the safe side if you are in doubt.

This applies to grammar, as to everything else. It applies to clearness. When you are not sure that your readers will understand at once precisely what you mean, then rewrite the phrase. When you are not sure that certain words are not unnecessary, cut them out. When you are not sure that something is not dull, cut it out or alter it. When you are not sure that a phrase is appropriate, cut it out or alter it. So in grammar when you are not sure that a phrase is correct, cut it out or express it differently. Be on the safe side.

As exercises, correct the following "Composition is learnt by practising it"

You will find here that there are combined together two right phrases "Composition is learnt by one who practises it" (or "Composition is learnt by or through practice"), and "One learns composition by practising it" Either phrase would be right The blend of the two phrases, the contamination of them (as it is technically called), is wrong You will find this fault abounding everywhere, noticeably in American literature Now, my objection to it is that it is utterly unnecessary You can so easily avoid it It offends the refined reader, and it does not help the ordinary reader It is due simply and solely to the sloppiness of the writer his or her want of taste or knowledge or patience

As another example, correct this phrase: "The reason why he liked it was because it was old"

Here two correct phrases are blended "The reason why he liked it was that it was old, the fact that it was old," and "He liked it because it was old" The two correct phrases are blended or contaminated, and make one wrong phrase

A similar instance would be, "Every one walking here does so at their own risk" a contamination of "Every one does so at his own risk," and of "All people do so at their own risk"

But the correction of these and other grammatical faults we had better leave till we come to revise the expression

The same will apply to the spelling of words, about which I shall not say anything in this book on Essays

in the Making Correct spelling is essential to successful composition, but it is a matter quite easily corrected during the revision. Here, once more, it is better to be on the safe side. Use the spelling which offends fewest people. Much will depend on the country you are in. When I lived for a year in America, I spelt words as *labor*, *center*, *program*, but I could not use this spelling in England. It is not only that I think it unscientific it is that I know it is not on the safe side.

In punctuation, also, be on the safe side. I think you will be on the safe side, probably, to use more commas than you naturally would, to use them where at present you use no commas at all, and more colons, semi-colons, and full stops where now you use commas.

Is there no other law of style besides the above—namely, besides clearness, true economy, interest, appropriateness, variety, musical language, correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

* * *

The principle of **unity and cohesion** is, I think, a general if not a universal one. Unity of style is very hard to define. We will consider cohesion first.

Its most obvious instance is that words which are connected together in sense should be connected together in position also. There are hundreds of mistakes made daily in the daily papers, owing to wrong arrangement. Here are a few examples.

“The influence of writing upon the physical health is very noticeable.”

“Describe what you did yesterday on paper.”

“He accused them of trespassing in a most irate manner.”

Correct these

"The influence which writing has upon the physical health "

"Describe, on paper, what you did yesterday "

"In a most irate manner he accused them of trespassing "

Now these mistakes are not inevitable. It is easy either to set the adverb near to its verb, or the adverbial phrase near to its verb, or else to paraphrase. A doctor once spoke of the pleasant effects of walking on the nerves. Now, he could have altered the order, and said, "The pleasant effects, on the nerves, of walking," in which case the commas would have been his help, but that would have been clumsy. He could have said, "The pleasant effects which walking has on the nerves," or, "The benefit which the nerves receive from a pleasant walk." As it was, his expression broke the law of cohesion.

Cohesion of ideas does not belong to expression. It belongs to the arrangement of ideas—a process finished some time ago. We are only considering now cohesion in relation to words and sentences.

Unity is illustrated by the paragraph. I have never yet seen a satisfactory definition of the ideal paragraph. Professor Barrett Wendell emphatically insists that the paragraph should contain a single idea. At first this appears convincing. There should be unity in the paragraph. As a test of the unity, you should be able to sum it up in a single sentence, often in a single word written in the margin. And so far we might agree with him.

And suppose we had the above paragraph, and added to this a second paragraph, giving a further commendation of the Professor's view, we might be justified in doing so.

And a third paragraph might be added, objecting to the Professor's view, and then refuting the objection

Possibly a fourth paragraph might give an instance of a good paragraph

One common rule, then, is, give a paragraph which can be summed up in a single sentence, or, better still, in a single phrase or word

But the other side of the question is very doubtful. Should we put in a single paragraph *all* that can be summed up in a single phrase or a single word?

Since I began to speak of the Professor, have you noticed a mistake in the paragraphing?

I have written it purposely as an exercise for correction. You may notice several mistakes, it just depends on your point of view. But the mistake which I should point out would be this: that in the first paragraph I mentioned the Professor's view, and gave one reason for it, in the second paragraph I gave a second reason, or at least I said that that paragraph might contain a second reason. Now, I do not think that this is well-balanced. I think that I should have arranged the paragraphs as follows —

Paragraph 1 Statement of the Professor's view

„ 2 One reason why it is correct

„ 3 Another reason

„ 4 The objection
 „ 5 The objection answered } or these might
 form one paragraph

„ 6 An instance of a good paragraph

It seems to me that I had the balance wrong: the first paragraph contained a theory and one reason, the second contained a second reason. My better plan would have been to have made the first paragraph contain

the theory and both reasons, or else to have made the first paragraph contain the theory, and the second contain both reasons, or the second and third contain a reason each

But even the paragraphing can be left till the time of revision

The usual method is to put wavy lines like this, when the beginning of one paragraph should run on directly after the ending of the previous one, and to denote a new paragraph by the letter P, or two lines of this sort

The advantage of leaving as much as possible till the revision has been touched on already. It is a mistake to think of all the above corrections, it would be a still greater mistake to think of the things which we shall mention in Part VI, while we are doing the first expression itself that is to say, it would be a mistake if we had plenty of time at our disposal. Sometimes, when we are pressed for time, we must, as it were, revise while we are writing. Such writing is seldom as good as the quick writing corrected afterwards.

But I have found a way out of the difficulty. I like to revise the beginning of my Essay, as it were, while I write it. Then, before I proceed to the rest of the Essay, I read through the beginning part, and so get into the swing. Though I have had my attention diverted by correcting the grammar, etc., yet I bring my attention back into the right groove by reading through the beginning part.

As a rule, however, leave as much as possible for the time of revision. That is the time to consider whether you have violated the laws of music and rhythm and repetition of sounds, the laws of grammar, punctuation, and so forth. We shall touch, not on these laws themselves, but on a few instances, in Part VI.

YOU have now collected and selected, proportioned, and arranged your ideas, you have prepared the beginning of the Essay and some means of emphasis, then you have expressed the ideas—quickly, without paying too much attention to details of style. Now revise the ideas, polishing the composition. Here, as in the previous Part, your business is not so much with the ideas as with their expression.

Can you think of any hint which you would give to any one whom you were trying to teach how to revise an Essay?

It is a good plan to practise the revision of a letter which you have written.

Then you should invite criticism by others. Too often people resent criticism, as if it were a personal insult. Criticism should always be taken as if it were kindly meant. If the criticism is sound, use it, if it is not sound, do not use it. But do not treat it as an insult. It is a great blessing to see one's self occasionally from the outside, even if that view is distorted. The most spiteful criticisms are often the most useful.

Or, if you cannot get people to criticise your writing, or cannot even bear to ask them to criticise it, then be yourself your own critic. As I suggested before, leave

intervals during which your mind becomes less prejudiced in favour of what you have done you become more and more like an outsider, more and more inclined to judge impartially

When you are revising, you can go through the Headings suggested above for the treatment of ideas Just as you cut out and pruned ideas before, so you can cut out and prune ideas now, just as you attended to the connections of ideas before, so you can attend to the connections of words now

During the revision, you see the advantage of having used a fresh page for each fresh paragraph, if you have had plenty of time at your disposal For you may have to make copious corrections The paragraph looks clumsy and untidy You must rewrite it You want to rewrite only that paragraph, not the whole page If you have the paragraph on a page to itself, you save considerable time and trouble

When you have revised your composition, you can give yourself the chance of a further revision by sending it and letting it compete with other compositions for some prize or newspaper article Invite criticisms when you send your Essay, and wait patiently for the return of the Essay If it comes back unaccepted, then you should revise it, looking at it from the Editor's point of view

Throughout, make notes on your mistakes—not only abstract notes, but also in the form of actual examples corrected Make a hobby of this self-correction, adding to your list of mistakes from time to time In this sentence, for instance, you have a fault to correct “Adding to your list of mistakes from time to time” is a fault It is not so much “your list of mistakes from time to time,” but “adding from time to time to your

list of mistakes." It is a fault of wrong arrangement of words, the words which are connected together in meaning being without due reason separated from one another

Be over-critical of yourself rather than too uncritical, but do not be morbidly over-critical, except for certain special efforts, for ordinary purposes ordinary accuracy will probably be sufficient

Now, in these notes on revision I shall omit elementary mistakes, referring for instances of them to books by Abbott and other writers. I shall not call attention to such mistakes as "the man *whom* he supposed had done it," nor to mistakes of punctuation, spelling, etc. I shall gather up a few ideas from the previous Part, and add a few new suggestions and an abundance of exercises.

When you have expressed your ideas, put aside for the moment all thoughts about expression *as* expression, and see if the selection or arrangement or proportioning of ideas is satisfactory, and alter where you can. Then, and not till then, revise the expression itself, now no longer attending to such questions as whether the ideas are true and just, but considering rather whether they are clearly expressed and appropriately expressed and accurately expressed, *i.e.* considering rather now the technique of words and sentences and paragraphs

As I have said before, to attend to this during the process of writing may be fatal to the flow of language. It is as if, while you were walking, you were very careful about all your details of dress and about the exact straight-forward-ness of your step, and so forth. You can leave these matters to be practised sensibly beforehand and corrected sensibly afterwards

After expressing the ideas, go through the Essay, and be sure that your words are clear, that they give a precise and exact meaning. Personally, I prefer to avoid words with two meanings. The Americans use the word *sick*, and you cannot tell whether they mean sick in the sense of suffering from nausea or sick in the sense of ill. I prefer to use the word *sick* in the one sense, the word *ill* in the other. They use the word *shoes* in reference both to shoes and to boots. you cannot tell whether they mean shoes or boots. When there are two words for two ideas, I do not see the point of using one word for both ideas. There is, of course, a certain advantage in ambiguous expression, Mr Gladstone was the master of it. Perhaps he is one of the most conspicuous examples of an artful choice of words and sentences with two meanings, you cannot tell which he meant to convey to the reader, or whether he really meant to convey only one meaning to the exclusion of the other. Flaubert, on the other hand, was excessively nice in his choice of words. he would spend hour after hour in satisfying himself that his sentences conveyed only one meaning, and that his meaning

As an exercise in the art of finding a precise meaning, try the following. There is a system of exercises which alternately extends the various muscles fully and contracts them fully. This I have called "The full movement System." It was set forth by its inventor as the System. Really, it was nothing of the kind. For a very important part of exercise is *not*-to-use muscles unnecessarily, not to use muscles which you would gain nothing by using. for instance, not to jerk your face-muscles or frown when you should be doing a movement only with the arm and wrist. What name

would you give to describe this second System of physical culture, this system of not using muscles unnecessarily ?

And what name would you give to another system, the art of stopping your movements at any required place ? An express train runs from terminus to terminus, but it may be important to draw a train up suddenly at some local station. So with a movement. It is ridiculous to suppose that we always want to make full movements, sometimes we want to make movements for only part of the way. What name would you give to this system ?

When you are in doubt, go back to pictures of some one doing something, pictures and sense-impressions. In the latter case, for instance, first make a full movement. For instance, rotate the arm round as if it were a windmill. That is a full movement. Now, instead of making that full movement, stop your arm when your finger will be pointing to a certain mark on the wall. That may help you to an accurate description.

Try to find the best possible phrase which will convey to the reader just what you mean and no other idea at all. Get your own idea clear, then express it. Do not think that you can justify yourself by proving that your words *can* mean what you mean. Be sure that they *do* mean this, and this *alone*. I remember that at school I was having a Latin Prose Composition corrected. I found one of my Latin phrases underlined as wrong. I showed that it was a classical phrase in this sense. "Yes," said the master, "but your phrase can mean two things. You are not allowed to take liberties. You must confine yourself to phrases which mean only one thing."

Avoid not only words which make the reader hesitate between two interpretations avoid phrases which make him change his ideas The Americans are gross offenders in this respect For some reason or other, probably for the sake of economy, and owing to the hurrying habit, they have almost given up the hyphen I found this phrase in a "New Thought" publication not long ago "Eschew health destroying thoughts" I was astonished by the first two words Why should I be told to eschew health? Then I had to alter the meaning, when I read the words "destroying thoughts" At first I asked myself how health could destroy thoughts Then I saw what the writer meant Here a hyphen—"health-destroying thoughts"—would have made the meaning perfectly clear I suppose that in such phrases there is never any necessity for using a hyphen we can always paraphrase, and say, "Eschew thoughts which would destroy health" But many American writers are in too great a hurry to paraphrase, they rush into obscurities

Avoid even little changes of view, especially unnecessary changes of the subject If you pictured some one as doing something, you would be less likely to change the subject Of course, sometimes the subject actually changes in the picture, *e.g.* "He went to the place, and some one else came to him there" This may be a better expression than "He went to the place, where he was met by some one" But, in the following case, the change of subject is unnecessary and undesirable, "He asked the people on the road which was the shortest way to the village It was his intention" (why not, "He wished"?) "to get there before his brother The path which he took happened to be the wrong one" (why not, "He happened to take the wrong path"?) "Then his

brother was seen by him approaching" (why not, "He saw his brother approaching"?)

Similarly, avoid unnecessary changes of words, as in "He wished to fulfil his purpose, but was unable to accomplish his object" "Which is the best way? The best method is the following" You can find hundreds of instances of this in writing which is considered by its author to be elegant because it does not use the same word twice I am speaking here only of unnecessary change of form, without corresponding change of sense

The opposite fault is to have the same form, or a cognate form, when there is a change of sense Sometimes it is hard to avoid this, but as a rule it is easy The word "that" has many senses Perhaps you know the combination, "He said that that that that that that man had used was ungrammatical" I gave above a quotation with the words "make" and "take" in different senses You will find examples abounding everywhere The following is an extreme example —

"My dear fellow, it does not do to do a thing of that kind it's not kind, and it's not the thing You'd much better leave off at once Once you get into the habit, you may get hauled over the coals"

It is so easy to avoid such faults they are never inevitable You can always be on the safe side, if you take a little trouble And that advice, "Be on the safe side," applies to every grammatical rule or disputed point "The shortest way is to keep straight on, then to suddenly turn to the right by the sign-post" Why not "to turn suddenly"? There is no advantage in the split infinitive If you cannot use an ordinary infinitive, then paraphrase

In the same way, avoid blends (or contaminations), to

which I have alluded before You find them in letters answering invitations "Mr Jones wishes he had been able to accept Mrs Smith's kind invitation, but I am very sorry I cannot come to your dinner-party"

Metaphors are often wrongly blended, as in the examples quoted in nearly every book on style. You can avoid confusion of metaphors if you carry the metaphors back to their pictures and sense-impressions "A mere flea-bite in the ocean" A flea-bite stands for a comparatively little thing, the ocean stands for something great The underlying sense is "an unimportant matter, comparatively" But picture the flea-bite in the ocean, and you avoid the mistake "A flea-bite on an elephant," or "a drop in the ocean," would be less objectionable Here, once more, the mistake is in the blend It is not necessary, when you have gone back to the picture and the personal language, to express the idea ultimately in this way, but to go back thus will help you to avoid mistakes, whatever your ultimate expression is

Another sort of blend is the wrong connection of words, as in the instance already cited, "The good effects of walking on the nerves" This may be regarded as a blend of "the good effects of walking" and "the good effects which walking has on the nerves" It is an instance of a wrong connection Words which are not closely connected in meaning are here closely connected in form Avoid this as a general rule Some other instances of it are quoted below

The rule is not absolute Sometimes emphasis demands an inverted order Sometimes the natural order would be tame and give an anti climax The poet Wordsworth was often guilty of anti-climax, partly because he kept too much to the natural order I

remember a Latin instance, a translation of "went mad and bit the man".—

"Est factus furiens atque momordit eum."

Here (besides *furiens*) there is the fault of tameness. A "wrong" order in Latin, as in other languages, has sometimes been the saving of a sentence. Either the subject or the object or the verb may be put out of its order for special reasons—especially for the sake of emphasis.

Emphasis you are generally told not to denote by italics nor by underlining. But surely italics and underlining are to written words what stress is to spoken words. And written words are, I believe, spoken words—"words spoken out loud to oneself"—by most people. The objection to italics is that they are supposed to be never indispensable. That certainly is true. What you express by italics or underlining you can also express by paraphrase, or by changed order of words. In "It struck him," if the emphasis is to be on *him*, you can underline him, or put *him* in italics, or capitals, or other different type, or, on the other hand, you can paraphrase "It was he that the thing struck," or, in a certain class of writing, you can use the other means—changed order.

Appropriateness has probably already presented itself to you as a fundamental principle in revision. See that your language is appropriate. For a commonplace topic use commonplace language. Do not call home a "domiciliary residence," unless you wish to represent the speech of a domestic servant or other highly educated person.

As practice in correcting the expression of ideas, read the following extracts, and say what words could be altered with most advantage. The extracts are from Sir

Michael Foster's "Simple Lessons in Health (For the Use of the Young)," * and Dr. Curgenven's "The Child's Diet" †

First, however, criticise the idea in this first sentence, from the former book. Then proceed to criticise the words

"It often happens that several people sleep in one small room with the doors and the windows shut. If you were one of those sleeping there, you would, perhaps, not feel anything particularly wrong, but if you had to get up before the others, and to go out into the open air to fetch something, especially into open country air, and were to come back into the room before the others had got up, you would say, 'Oh, how close and stuffy!' What a nasty smell!"

"Again, it sometimes, I am afraid, happens that a lot of children are taught in a small schoolroom with the windows and doors all shut. Were you to be sitting in such a school in the morning you wouldn't notice anything, and perhaps you wouldn't notice much even at the end of school. But if the teacher, towards the end of the school, were to send you into the open air to fetch something, and you were to come back from the open air into the schoolroom before school was over, you would again say, 'Oh, how close and stuffy!'"

"Again, a lot of men, or of women, or of boys, or of girls, are working all day in a small room with the door and the windows shut. If you went into such a room when the people had been at work for some time, you would again say, 'Oh, how close and stuffy!'"

* * * * *

The idea is inappropriate to a book "For the Use of the Young." It is not good to encourage them to such remarks. If the book had been called "For the Benefit of the Young," it would have been less open to criticism.

Now for the words

* Published by Macmillan and Co

† Published by H. K. Lewis.

(1st paragraph) "One of those sleeping,"—say, "one of those who were sleeping"

(2nd paragraph) "at the end of school . at the end of the school"—a needless change leave out the last "the"

(3rd paragraph) "Again" is awkward after "again" near the end of the previous paragraph, the third "again" is still more awkward

"You are beginning to feel tired and sleepy, and perhaps your head begins to ache

' And, indeed, we find that children who sleep every night in close, stuffy rooms are not so strong as those who sleep in large, airy rooms They are pale and weak, they don't grow up strong and healthy"

* * * * *

(1st paragraph) The change from "are beginning" to "begins" is unnecessary say, "is beginning to ache", or else say "you begin" The subject need not have been changed the sentence might have run thus, "You begin to feel tired and sleepy, and perhaps (you begin) to suffer from head-ache"

(2nd paragraph) The "they" of the last sentence is rather clumsy, referring to the "children"—this is only a minute point The next is more elementary

"Very often the fire at home, when everybody has gone out and there is no one to put fresh wood or coal on, seems to have gone out You can't see any light—it does not seem to be burning at all"

"Gone out" is used in two senses say, "When every one is away" "Seems," "see," and "seem" grate somewhat on the ear.

"You know that your bodies are always warm Even on a cold winter's day, when you feel very cold, your body is warm"

* * * * *

The change from the plural, "your bodies," to the singular, "your body," is unnecessary

"One reason why the air of a room in which people are living becomes close and stuffy, is because each person is breathing into the room invisible smoke"

See p 114 You can say either, "One reason why the air becomes close and stuffy is (the fact) that each person is breathing . . .," or else, "The air becomes close and stuffy partly because each person is breathing . . ."

"Well, then, the air in the bell-jar has now got no invisible smoke in it to hinder the burning of the spirit-lamp

"Well, then, when a candle or fire is burning, it not only gives out invisible smoke, but it uses up some but not all the air in which it is burning And when a candle, burning in a jar or other shut-up place, goes out, it goes out partly because it chokes itself with the invisible smoke which it gives out, and partly because it uses up some of the air.

"Why some of the air? Why can't it use up all the air?"

"Because air—the air we breathe, the air all around us—is made up of two things One of these things is used for burning, without this thing burning cannot take place, whenever anything is being burnt this thing is being used up in the burning We give this thing a name of its own We call it by the strange name of *oxygen* I should like to call it by some simpler name, but I am afraid we must use this awkward name

"Well, then, part of the air is made up of oxygen

"We can make an air which is oxygen and nothing else . . .

"Well, then, when a fire . . ."

(1st paragraph) The word "got" is unnecessary Avoid such half-slang words when you gain nothing by using them

(2nd, 5th, and 7th paragraphs) The beginning, "Well, then . . .," shows a want of resource and variety

(2nd paragraph) "But it uses up some but not all the air" Say, "It also uses up some of the air, but not all the air", or say, "But it uses up some of the air, though not all the air" The repetition of "but" is objectionable

"You first take air into your lungs, and then you send it out again"

A very small point—a want of symmetry Say either, "You first take and you then send", or, "First you take and then you send"

"The air which you breathe out is very different

"Besides this, the air you breathe out has a lot of invisible smoke in it"

The change from "the air which you breathe out" to "the air you breathe out" is unnecessary

"A lot of people were shut up in a small dungeon, a small cellar When they came to look at them the next morning they found most of them dead—suffocated, because they had been breathing each other's breath"

"Many" would have been better than "a lot" The "they" and "them" of the next sentence are singularly confusing Why not, "When they were seen the next morning, most of them were found dead"?

"The body does not burn properly, does not burn as it ought to do, does not get enough oxygen, and gets clogged all over with invisible smoke"

Here, again, "get" and "gets" are clumsy

"And the burning of their bodies is not going on as it ought to do because they don't get enough fresh air, don't get the oxygen

which they ought to get, don't get rid of the invisible smoke which they make as fast as they ought to do "

"They are pale because they are not making blood properly, and because they are not making blood properly they are weak as well as pale Even if they have plenty to eat, they can't get the good out of the food they ought to get "

(1st paragraph) Besides the clumsiness of the repeated "get," notice the obscurity of the "because" clause, which (till one reads the sentence through) might give a reason why the burning is not going on, or a reason why it ought to go on A comma after "ought to do" would make the construction clearer

(2nd paragraph) "They can't get the good out of the food they ought to get" Here, also, is a wrong order "They ought to get" refers to "good," not to "food"—it should come near to "good" "They can't get out of the food the good which they ought to get "

"Well, then, if we are to grow up well and strong, we must have plenty of fresh air "

The repetition of "well" is unnecessary The second "well" can be changed to "healthy"

"When you smell that you may be sure that a lot of invisible smoke has been given off too "

The repetition of "that" is rather clumsy

"Your nose will always tell you when the air has really got quite bad "

"Become" would be preferable to "got "

"When the fire burns the visible smoke goes up the chimney and away "

I first read this as "When the fire burns the invisible smoke" There should be a comma after "burns"

"But if, as unhappily sometimes, or even often happens, this is not the case, and as school goes on the air gets worse and worse, don't try to mend matters by opening this or that window just a little, don't make little narrow draughts, which don't do much good and may do much harm. If things get very bad, throw open all the windows and doors for awhile, stop lessons for a bit, and move about as if you were in the open air, and then, when the good supply of fresh air has sweetened the room, begin the lessons again."

"Unhappily . happens" joins on the ear, "don't" and "don't" join also, "for awhile" need not be changed to "for a bit"

"The most important time in the feeding of a child is during the first six months of its life"

"The most important time is the first six months," this is contaminated with "A child's food is very important during the first six months"

"This can be entirely avoided if, directly the milk has been brought to the boil, it is put in a jug and stood either on ice or in running water, so as to cool it down rapidly, stirring it or keeping it shaken until cold"

The participle "stirring" is "unattached"—it lacks a subject. There are several ways of connecting the sentence, *eg*—

- (1) "You can avoid this if, directly you have brought the milk to the boil, you put it in a jug and stand it so as to cool it down, stirring it . . .," or,
- (2) "This can be avoided if . . . it is put in a jug so as to cool down and if then you stir it"

"The feeding-bottle should be scalded out with boiling water, or actually boiled between each feed, and kept standing in fresh cold water"

"Between each feed" is a contamination of "between each feed and the next" (or "between the feeds"), and "before each feed" (or "after each feed")

"There is no surer way of deranging digestion than by chilling a child, and besides which there is always bronchitis and pneumonia ready to descend on the careless"

The way is not *by* chilling the way is "to chill" Here is a contamination, again, between. "There is no surer way . . . than to chill," and "You can most surely derange . . . by chilling"

"And besides which" is a contamination of "and" and "besides which"

"There is" had better be "There are"

"Another way in which I am sure many children are chilled—but this refers more to older ones, and not to infants—is by allowing them to sit and play on the floor"

Here, again, the way is not by allowing (by means of allowing) the way is, consists of, allowing

"Carbohydrates do not enter into the composition of the tissues, but their chief use, like the fats, is to supply heat and force, and to check albuminous waste"

The subject is changed needlessly Why not, "Carbohydrates do not enter . . . but they, like the fats, have, as their chief use, to supply . . .," or else, "The function of carbohydrates is not to enter their chief function, like the chief function of the fats, is to supply heat and force" ?

"We cannot be kept alive for any length of time on carbohydrates alone. But with proteids it is different, for by giving larger amounts this is possible, but entails a great deal of waste."

Very loose grammar! The subject need not be changed. "We cannot be kept alive . . . on carbohydrates alone, but we can be kept alive on proteids alone, by taking larger amounts, but we thus cause a great deal of waste." Or, "Carbohydrates cannot but Proteids can, if larger amounts be given. This, however, entails waste." The two "buts" are awkward.

"For breakfast he has some form of pap food, such as bread and milk, or porridge, followed by bread-and-butter. At dinner he takes potato, bread, and farinaceous pudding, and his tea consists almost entirely of bread-and-butter or jam and cake."

The changes of words are needless. Why not, "he has some form of pap food . . . he has porridge," or else, "he takes . . . he takes . . ." Why not "for breakfast . . . for dinner," or else, "at breakfast at dinner," The change in the last sentence is needless. we could say, "for [or, at] tea he has [or, takes] nothing but . . ."

"Either the child is getting an excess of food in the extra starch and sugar, or there is a deficiency of proteid, and still more of fat, in its diet."

Another needless change and want of symmetry. Why not, "Either there is an excess . . . or there is a deficiency," or else, "Either the child is having or it is having . . ." I should prefer to say, instead of "still more," "a still more striking deficiency."

"But in a great many cases it is that they do not know how to eat what they do get."

Awkward! Why not, "But in very many cases the reason is this They do not know how to eat what they (do) get"?

"Moreover, the food was hard and tough, and the necessary mastication resulted in a large flow of saliva, not only beneficial for gastric digestion, but for the teeth, which were bathed in this alkaline fluid"

A want of symmetry and balance This should be, "beneficial not only for gastric digestion, but for the teeth", or else, "not only beneficial for the gastric digestion, but also beneficial for the teeth."

"Miller found that by putting teeth in a mixture of human saliva and bread, or sugar, and keeping this for some time in an incubator, the fluid turned acid"

Again, a contamination of, "by putting teeth in a mixture . he made the fluid acid", and, "when teeth were put in a mixture the fluid turned acid"

"As the mucous membrane of the small bowel becomes congested, the opening of the bile-duct gets narrowed"

Why change "becomes" to "gets"?

I finish this chapter with two examples, from letters written to myself the first is from an American editor who wanted me to write him an article gratuitously, the second is from a health-pupil.

"We have never yet paid a penny for contributions to our paper I do not myself, as editor, receive anything from it I suppose that it is because this spirit of self-sacrifice is so indelibly stamped on every page that has given it a circulation on this side of the water that is considered phenomenal"

Without commenting on the spelling of "indellably," we notice the contamination of several constiuctions, *e g*—

(1) "It is because this spirit is stamped that we have a circulation " and (2) "it is the fact that this spirit is stamped that has given it a circulation "

The three uses of "that" are extremely clumsy

The last few words show a wrong order, "that is considered phenomenal" should go closely, not with "water," or "this side of the water," but with "circulation "

"As a rule, I never drink at dinner, sometimes a glass of lemonade is taken "

Here we have a loose expression, perhaps a blend of, "As a rule, I do not drink," and, "I prefer never to drink " The change of subject is unnecessary "sometimes I take [oi, drink] a glass of lemonade "

You can get emphasis now and then by a process of pruning the words Part of this method is technically known as "asyndeton" It is especially common for antithesis you prune out the word "but," leaving the two ideas set back to back or front to front In the authorised and revised translations of the New Testament every connecting word is reproduced The passages would often be stronger if these words were left out It is Greek to use them it is not English

In revising the essay with a view to seeing that the emphasis is in the right places, make sure that it is not in the wrong places If a trivial idea stands out, correct its expression, and make the idea unnoticeable

It would be easy to mention hundreds of other

details, hundreds of other mistakes which the reviser should remove, the above will be nearly sufficient for the purpose of this book, which rather deals with essays in the making than with essays already made. Yet a few words, about essays already made, will be a help.

While it may be useful to keep your essays (I wish I had kept my school-essays), it may be more convenient to keep the cards or the schemes of ideas.

The cards you can keep in packets, numbered (1, 2, 3, 4, etc). Then, in a special card-box, or in an ABC book, have an index of subjects, with references to these numbers. There are many plans of cataloguing. They are worth a study, because they suggest time-saving habits and also a training in method generally.

One system would keep the schemes thus. Put each in a cover (you can buy coloured covers at very little cost, in large quantities). On each cover is a different number. In an ABC book or in a card-box are the subjects of these schemes, with reference to the numbers.

It is good to put the dates of schemes on them, for convenience in referring back.

Any fresh notes on the various schemes may be kept together in a special cover, and from time to time this cover may be emptied and its contents distributed among the special covers.

Hints on sending Manuscripts to Press What hints would you suggest to a boy or man who was going to send his manuscript to the press?

Offer only subjects appropriate for a special paper. Or else, if you have written your essay, choose the paper for it. In other words, choose the subject for the paper, or

else the paper for the subject Do not offer to the *Daily Mail* a dissertation on the Greek Infinitive Do not at any time offer a popular article, an article appealing to general readers, to the *Classical Review*

In order to save trouble, I have found it a good plan to send first the idea and the scheme of the article to the Editor for his approval Sometimes he will accept the article immediately, sometimes he will say that he may very likely accept it, or that he will certainly accept it if it is well done If he says that he does not care for this subject, then I am saved the trouble of writing it My experience has been that equally good articles which have been accepted on the strength of a scheme have been refused when an article has been sent complete! You must remember that the Editor is a busy man, or else thinks he is, being only unbusinesslike

It is not merely a matter of the right subject, it is also a matter of the right length for a special paper Either, again, send a certain article to a paper which wants articles of that length, or first choose your paper, and then write an article of the appropriate length for it

Then there is the matter of time Few articles are published directly they are sent, or even directly they are accepted I have sometimes had to wait months before publication It depends on the paper One Editor will be preparing his Christmas Number in June Knowing this, do not send him an article on Cricket in June send him an article on a winter subject

With the article enclose a stamped and addressed envelope Put your address on the manuscript, also, and the date of sending

In your big envelope enclose a brief note If you are sending only a scheme, then offer to explain that

scheme further or to see the Editor personally, and invite criticism

Keep notes of all dates on which you have finished articles, have sent articles, and have received back articles

Be patient and courteous Many Editors are not too thoughtful They are apt to put off the reading of manuscripts But you gain nothing by impatience I say without hesitation that an Editor to whom you write and suggest that an article may have gone astray in the post is more likely to see promptly to the matter than the Editor whom you accuse of being either careless or dishonest

On the other hand, insist on your rights If you think that an article is worth five guineas, do not let the Editor publish it free, or even for five shillings

But remember that the competition is severe, and that what the Editor wants may be a name rather than the best possible material In order to get a name, you must publish somehow Be willing, then, at first, if necessary, to publish for a small sum or for nothing, or even to pay for the right of publication, as so many novelists do at the start. I did my first articles for nothing Now I insist on my minimum fee of ——— for an ordinary newspaper article

When you have the article accepted, try to get from the Editor some idea as to the date of publication, and, if possible, some sort of agreement to that effect Now and then, the Editor has a sudden pressure of material, and is forced to put off publication, but he may delay quite unnecessarily You can prevent this by a written agreement

You may prefer to deal directly with Editors, or you may prefer to deal with them through an agent Do not

use an agent who demands a large fee in advance. The genuine agent is the one who either refuses to take up your article, or else runs the risk of sharing profits with you somehow. I have tried several kinds of agents. One was satisfactory, he had a share of the profits, and therefore he did his best. He always had the right of refusing to deal with any manuscript which he did not think he could place.

The agent will look after American rights for you, if any one will. They are extremely hard to secure. The American law is not a fair one. You cannot copyright in America unless you have at least part of the manuscript printed there. At first, then, neglect America, as a general rule. Later on, you may find it worth while to arrange for American rights as well.

Written agreements are important. I deal with them and with other matters in a special Correspondence Course which trains individuals in writing and speaking. Here I need only say that the agreement should be full of details. Leave nothing vague. Otherwise you may be understanding one agreement and the Editor another, and the result may be a quarrel.

PART VII SUMMARY, AND GENERAL HINTS

BEFORE reading this chapter, first of all summarise the book. Or, better still, collect ideas as to what you would say if you were teaching a beginner.

Suppose that, in an examination, there are five Essay-questions set. One is to be chosen. One is chosen, and the Essay is written. What sort of an Essay is it likely to be?

If the writer has written it as a single process, then, unless he is a genius, he is likely to have written it keenly but clumsily, with some enthusiasm, but little method. If he had attended too closely to the method, he would have lost some of the enthusiasm.

A certain number of the papers show traces of a scheme. First, the scheme has been prepared, then the Essay has been written. Here there have been two processes instead of one. Here would be similar faults, but probably a better collection of ideas, better proportion, better order, perhaps somewhat more polished expression.

Now comes the work of the examiner. Let us imagine him to be a man who knows all the various faults and merits possible in an Essay. He goes through the Essays, and gives marks according to the number of faults and merits. Perhaps, if we analysed his marking, we might find it as follows in the case of one particular paper —

Collection of ideas—fair
 Selection or rejection of ideas—fair
 Proportioning of ideas—bad
 Beginning of Essay—good
 Arrangement of ideas—bad
 Expression of ideas—on the whole, poor —
 Clearness—moderate
 Brevity—excellent
 Appropriateness—bad
 Variety—bad.
 Music—very bad
 Grammar—execrable

Imagine this to be your Essay. The examiner has gone through your Essay for you with great care, and has told you of these faults, leaving only the beginning unaltered. He has quite convinced you that he is right and you are wrong. Then he has told you to correct your faults, to write better.

I take this as an extremely conscientious examiner. I have never known such a one myself, nor a teacher who treated any Essay or any work of mine in so thorough a manner. The majority of examiners were content to assign a certain number of marks. Perhaps on the examination-papers there were to be found blue pencil marks, meaning something to him, nothing to me. But ninety-nine out of a hundred examination-papers I never saw again after I had written them. The majority of examiners who suggested anything simply suggested that I should write better. That did not help me in the least. I had really tried my utmost.

They did not help me directly, except by discouraging me. They certainly did not help me to help myself. They told me to write better, they did not tell me *how*

to write better, they did not tell me where my chief faults lay (I think they really lay in all the above processes!) At the most, they distinguished between the matter and the style

I can illustrate the uselessness of such instructions (except for advanced writers) by a comparison with cricket. An analyst watches your stroke. You ask him, after the practice or play, what were your faults. He gives you a list of them: you did not keep your eye on the ball, you stood wrongly—your feet especially were in the wrong position, your weight was wrongly distributed, you neglected to use your weight and force, before the stroke, you did not send your bat back far enough nor straight enough, nor at the right time, during the stroke, you did not send your bat forward far enough nor straight enough, nor at the right time, you did not send your left elbow forward, and so on. This is a criticism of one stroke out of many.

Next imagine a general criticism of your batting, then a general criticism of your cricket.

Now imagine yourself trying to correct the whole of your cricket, as a single process!

Or imagine yourself simply trying to correct your forward stroke, as a single process, during play, or even before play.

Yet the genius-player tries to teach you in this way. To him it is all one process, or, at the most, two or three processes.

Next read the great work on batting by C. B. Fry and G. W. Beldam. They will not only show the finished results, with excellent photographs of play during action, they will also show you the different parts of strokes,

Then sensibly correct your strokes, not during the game. Both Fry and Beldam have practised a great deal outside the game, and even outside the practice-nets. They very seldom correct themselves during the play, but correct themselves before and after the play, and correct the various parts and processes by themselves, or at least attend to these processes in turn, adopting any mechanism they think good.

Contrast Fry's batting to-day with Fry's batting when he was at Oxford. Since that time he has practised batting scientifically: for instance, using the swinging ball to give him a good stroke.

This plan of mastering the art, not as a whole all at once, but first as a series of processes, one by one, is a good plan for the teacher and for the learner. It enables the teacher to put his finger on the weak spots, it enables the learner to correct himself comparatively easily.

The objection may be made that this will render the Essay-writing, or whatever the art is, self-conscious and mechanical. But what will be the effect of the vague phrase, "Your style is not good"? Even that may render the Essay-writer rather self-conscious. It certainly will not cure the complaint.

As a matter of fact, if a person knows how to correct his processes one by one and to master the mechanism of each, and if he sticks to such practice steadily, then soon, instead of each process remaining self-conscious, it becomes sub-conscious, natural, easy. Instead of clumsiness, freedom and enjoyment follow.

There is the additional advantage that the learner has learnt not only his own art, but a method applicable to nearly every art.

Take any accomplishment—for instance, piano-playing. Your teacher tells you that you are not playing well enough, you are to play better, you are to practise more. You do practise. You improve a little, but not much. You change your teacher. You now have a man who can not only play, but can also teach. He watches you carefully. He says, "Your third finger is clumsy. You must exercise that by itself." So, instead of practising with all the fingers equally, you practise especially with the third finger. He even gives you particular exercises for it. Your play improves. Concentration has been brought to bear on your fault. You have then removed that fault. You have removed that fault by itself. You can now pass on to remove another fault, quite gently.

An objection to this system is that it is a mistake to teach all people after the same fashion. People should do things naturally. I reply, it is a mistake to teach people who can do things well, naturally. As to the other people, the results speak for themselves. Perhaps they do the thing flashily, they certainly do not do it successfully. At cricket they make few runs, at Essay-writing they get few marks, later, if their living depends on their writing, few pounds.

That is to say, unless they are naturally good at the art, unless they are geniuses.

Why is this? Whence this fallacy? Because the art, though a single art and one process to the genius, is a blend of many processes to the duffer. There may be one general law to guide people in cricket, but what is it? Is it to keep the eye on the ball, to keep the feet right, to keep the bat moving along a straight line? Here are three laws. Is there one law that comprises all

three and many others as well, besides the utterly useless law of playing successfully ?

So it is in Essay-writing There may be one general law to guide us in Essay-writing , but what is it ? Is it to collect ideas well, to select them well, to proportion them well, to arrange them well, and so forth ? I am not aware that any one law or any three laws will suffice for practical improvement .

During any process there should be no thought of the process before or the processes after While you are arranging ideas, you should not think of collecting ideas, nor of expressing them

Concentration and general improvement are much helped by what may be called pre-suggestion, on which Mr Charles Leland insisted A more suitable word would be pre-assertion or pre-determination The best time for it is probably just before sleep, when quietly and confidently you say to yourself that you will *certainly* improve your skill in collecting ideas, or in arranging them, or wherever your weakness may lie

In the same way you can pre-determine that you will collect the ideas on such-and-such a subject

The very essence of pre-determination is that it should be made quietly and confidently, as you would give an order to a trusted servant , and then that plenty of time should be allowed in which the order may be worked out by your under-mind

At first choose interesting subjects, and, by preference, rather familiar subjects Later on, proceed to duller and less familiar subjects

Whatever the subject, collect ideas for yourself before you seek ideas from others, whether from books or from persons.

Correct yourself sensibly from time to time Do not be gloomy about it Do it steadily, in a sportsmanlike and business-like spirit, till you have made your different processes reasonably good

All the while have patience Do not hurry things There is a way of learning Essay-writing which corresponds to the way of growing flowers in a hothouse out of season A much better plan is to proceed quite quietly, not hustling through Essay-writing, but digesting each process in turn, and assimilating it, and then putting it to some use

Physical health is of enormous advantage A few hints on the subject will be of value here

It would be easy to write a chapter, or a whole book, on the importance of the healthy mind, the healthy intellect and morals But there is no space for it here We must take intelligence and self-control for granted they are essential to physical health

Here there is only space to consider a few points out of many And, first, I shall touch on positions and expressions

It is good to keep the chin in and the body not necessarily erect, but with its shoulders fairly well back, and its spine fairly straight, unless you find it easier, as many do, to work with a crooked spine—for instance, leaning over to one side In that case do not lean over always to the same side

A good plan is to practise sitting the other way round, and writing often, and, in fact, doing things generally, with the left hand

Much of the position will depend, needless to say, upon the chair, the desk or table, the light, and so forth Where you can regulate these, regulate them sensibly

and scientifically, for they make a great deal of difference to the position of the body and to the health generally

Although at first it may help you to frown, and generally to look intense, while you are working out some problem, yet I have found, and you may find also, that after practice of the art of muscular relaxing and repose brings better results. At first you may not know how to relax the muscles, but, after a time, if you practise faithfully and sensibly, you will master the art, and then you will work with far less effort and exhaustion.

As an example, take the muscles of the eye. Do not look intense or anxious or worried. Do not, as it were, clench your eyes, somewhat as you clench your hand. Rather look at some object in the far distance, or imagine that you are looking at it. This, you feel, at once untenses your eyes. It relaxes your muscles, it rests your eyes, much as a quiet colour would rest them, as distinct from a flaming red. Then come back again to your work, with your eyes still untensed. This will help your repose and physical economy, for you gain little or nothing by tensing your eyes.

Try the same with your hand, which perhaps you are gripping. Extend it out, with the tips of the fingers as far back as they will go. Hold the tips thus for a few seconds, then let the hand relax. Do the same with the arms.

Another help towards muscular relaxing, and towards health in general, and concentration, is the mastery of the breathing. I cannot describe the process fully here. There are three kinds of breathing—the lower or downward, the middle or outward, and the higher or upward. A normal breath should, I think, consist of a

succession of the three, first downward, then outward, then upward *

The breathing that best helps repose and poise is, I am sure, the outward breathing. You take the full breath in through the nostrils, hold it for a moment, and then let it quietly ooze out through the nostrils or through the mouth. As it oozes out, let the muscles relax and be at rest, like the muscles of a sleeping child or the drooping flower in the evening. You cannot do this as a full exercise in public. What you can do in public is to relax rather more than you are wont to at present, using the outward breath as a help.

Besides the exercises alluded to above—namely, the exercises for the left side, the untensing of the eye and hands, and the practice of fuller breathing and more rhythmical breathing—there are other exercises useful for private practice. There is a system of vibrations, invented by Mrs. North, this is, I think, the least exhausting of all systems of movement, and perhaps one of the most effective. Then there are series of leg-movements, and so forth, which I usually give in my Individual Health Courses. Sometimes people are surprised at being given leg-exercises and trunk-exercises when it is brain-work that they wish to excel in, but, for many reasons, these exercises affect brain-work favourably—for instance, by improving the circulation of the blood.

Throughout, however, there must be attention to individuality. That is why general advice is so often unprofitable. That is why I prefer to give advice to individuals, after hearing their answers to many questions.

* Many of my Health-pupils write to tell me how much the practice of this and the following exercise has helped their nerves and their power to work hard and satisfactorily.

It is so with diet and drink. The general rules are few. The individual rules are many.

As a general rule, not a universal one, it is a good plan not to drink during meals, but rather to drink just before meals.

And also to eat little before work. A heavy meal may necessitate a stimulant, if you wish to keep awake. For my own part, I do my best work in the early morning, after a cup of weak tea. I take no heavy breakfast. This is not a universal rule—it is just a personal experience. I am saying what suits me after fair trial, I do not guarantee that it would suit others.

The same applies to my favourite meal. I take perhaps two or three Milk Powder Tablets, or some of my own special biscuits. The former are a little dry, but their taste is not bad, and their effect is very good. Immediately after them I am able to settle down to work.

After too heavy a meal, I find I need something to keep me awake—either a great effort of will, or else tea. Now, it may be better to use tea than to use a supreme and continued effort of will, but it would be better still not to take the heavy meal, and then not to need the stimulant.

Another help towards a good Essay, besides right food and drink taken at the right times, is good air and moderate warmth. I am not sure that too invigorating air helps my thought. I am quite sure that too cold or too hot a room hinders my thought, though every year I am becoming less and less dependent on air and temperature for my work.

It may sound unreasonable to suggest hobbies as a help towards Essay-writing. Every one must feel that

good hobbies are a help to health by relieving the mind and giving it a change. Few realise how they are a help to Essay-writing, and especially to the collection of ideas and their expression in vivid language. Choose the right hobbies, such as cooking, carpentering, modelling, gardening, and games, and also collecting, and you see at once how much more real your stock of ideas becomes. Look at language itself. Calculate how much of it is based ultimately on such pursuits. You talk of "concocting" a letter. Once this was a metaphor from cooking. You talk of "dovetailing" ideas in an essay. Once this was a metaphor from carpentering. And so forth.

Make notes of the different times and conditions suitable for different work. I find in my own case that I generally collect ideas best in the train or in bed in the early morning or after a holiday of a few days. These I do not find to be the best times for expressing ideas. For that art, I believe, a later hour in the day is the best time. But other people will have other experiences.

Do not imagine that you must always be working at the processes. Do not grudge fallow times, during which your work is assimilated—is, as it were, engrained into you, soaks into you, becomes part of you, ready to be used.

Do not hurry and hustle, do not worry and fret, but, on the other hand, do not rest upon your laurels. Always see in front of you considerably better Essays than you have ever yet done, and, without morbid self-introspectiveness, and without becoming stale, to use a comparison from cricket and other games, attend sensibly to the correction of your faults, finding the weak process, and using every means in your power to make that process at least as strong as any other.

Last, but not least, keep memoranda of general hints as to improving your health and your Essay-writing. Do not let your hints on health be morbid and fussy and faddy. Do not put too many of them into practice at once. Probably the best plan will be to collect ideas from time to time, as if you were collecting them for a little private Essay on The Art of Fitness. For the fitter you are, the better your Essay-writing is likely to be, and the easier to you.

APPENDIX A FEW USEFUL BOOKS, AND EXERCISES.

I *Books which may be found stimulating to Thought and Originality.*

Buckle's "History of Civilisation in England"
A. P. Call's "Power through Repose" (Sampson Low)
Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," etc
Edward Carpenter's "Towards Democracy"
Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe."
Emerson's "Essays"
Froude's "Essays"
Hird's "Easy Outline of Evolution"
Le Bon's "The Mind of the Crowd"
Le Gros' "The Play of Animals"
Mommsen's "History of Rome"
Seeley's "Expansion of England"
Herbert Spencer's "Sociology"
Tolstoy's "The Gospel in Brief," etc
Walt Whitman's "Poems"

II *Books on Health*

A. P. Call's "Power through Repose"
A. Haig's "Uric Acid"
Hart's "The Food Factor in Disease"
Eustace Miles' "Muscle, Brain, and Diet," "Ten Laws
of Health," "A Boy's Control and Self Expression," etc
D. Schofield's "Nerves in Order"

III *Books on Composition, etc*

- Clifford Allbutt's "Notes on the Composition of Essays"
 L. Cornford's "English Composition"
 J. H. Fowler's "Nineteenth Century Prose"
 G. H. Lewes' "Principles of Success in Literature"
 J. H. Lobban's "English Essays"
 Eustace Miles' "How to Prepare Essays," etc
 (Rivingtons), "How to Remember" (Warne)
 Skerby's "Practical Papers on English"
 Barrett Wendell's "English Composition"

IV *Books useful for Special Types of Essays, as Models*

For Biography —

- Boswell's "Life of Johnson"
 Carlyle's "Burns" and "Frederick the Great"
 Benjamin Franklin's "Autobiography"
 Jowett's "Autobiography"
 Macaulay's "Essays"
 Lord Rosebery's "Napoleon"

V *Essay—Subjects for Practice.*

(As a special exercise in the arrangement of ideas,
 classify these subjects)

- Exaggeration
 Regardlessness
 Is manual work manly?
 Colonies
 Business methods
 Japan's greatness
 Effects of slavery
 Oligarchy
 Your ideal man
 The laws of health
 Vergil
 Originality
 Principles of evolution

The French character
Lessons from plants.
Causes of popular fallacies
“By their fruits ye shall know them.”
Woman’s influence
Ten positive commandments
Laws of health
The effects of music
Lessons from children
How to teach
Trusts
Description of the most exciting scene of your life
Is civilisation a blessing ?
Wordsworth
Dante
Lessons from animals
The greatness of Athens
Have we lived before ?
Poise
Military conscription
Forgiveness
City life.
Memory
England north and south
Patriotism.
Physical education.
Football
Physical ideals
Effects of imagination
Quickness
Memoianda
Concentration
Cricket.
Home life among different nations.
Hypnotism
War

Values of Exercise
Prayer
The voice and the character.
Influences of sea-power on history.
"Words change as men change"
Progress of military science.
The best hobbies for most people
Your favourite holiday-place.
Epaminondas.
Livy.
How to win and how to lose.
Your favourite hobby.
Tact
How to collect books.
Edison.
Description of a journey
Railways.
An ideal government
Inventions.
An ideal school.

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